

1508/59

THE
VICAR OF WAKEFIELD:

A T A L E.

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

SPERATE, MISERI; CAVETE, FELICES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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V O L. II.

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THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD.

CHAP. I.

THE HISTORY OF A PHILOSOPHIC VAGABOND, PURSUING NOVELTY, BUT LOSING CONTENT.

AFTER we had supped, Mrs Arnold politely offered to send a couple of her footmen for my son's baggage, which he at first seemed to decline; but, upon her pressing the request, he was obliged to inform her, that a stick and a wallet were all the moveable things upon this earth that he could boast of. "Why, aye, my son," cried I, "you left me but poor, and poor I find you are come back; and yet, I make no doubt, you have seen a great deal of the world." "Yes, Sir," replied my son; "but travelling after fortune is not the way to secure her; and indeed, of late, I have desisted from the pursuit." "I fancy, Sir," cried Mrs Arnold, "that the account of your adventures would be amusing: the first part of them I have often heard from my niece; but, could the company prevail

"for the rest, it would be an additional obligation."
 "Madam," replied my son, "I can promise you, the
 "pleasure you have in hearing will not be half so
 "great as my vanity in the recital; and yet, in the
 "whole narrative, I can scarce promise you one ad-
 "venture, as my account is not of what I did, but
 "what I saw. The first misfortune of my life,
 "which you all know, was great; but, though it
 "distressed, it could not sink me. No person ever
 "had a better knack at hoping than I. The 'less
 "kind I found Fortune then, the more I expected
 "from her another time; and, being now at the
 "bottom of her wheel, every new revolution might
 "lift, but could not depress me. I proceeded, there-
 "fore, towards London in a fine morning, no way
 "uneasy about to-morrow, but cheerful as the birds
 "that caroled by the road. I comforted myself
 "with various reflections, that London was the true
 "mart where abilities of every kind were sure of
 "meeting distinction and reward."

"Upon my arrival in town, Sir, my first care was
 "to deliver your letter of recommendation to your
 "cousin, who was himself in little better circum-
 "stances than me. My first scheme, you know,
 "Sir, was to be usher at an academy, and I asked
 "his advice in the affair. Our cousin received the
 "proposal with a true Sardonian grin. Ay, cried
 "he, this is a pretty career, indeed, that has been
 "chalked out for you. I have once been an usher
 "at a boarding school myself; and may I die by an



"anodyne necklace, but I had rather be an under-
"turnkey in Newgate. I was up early and late :
"I was brow-beat by the master, hated for my ugly
"face by the mistress, worried by the boys within,
"and never permitted to stir out to meet civility
"abroad. But are you sure you are fit for a school?
"Let me examine you a little. Have you been
"bred apprentice to the business? No. Then you
"won't do for a school. Can you dress the boys
"hair? No. Then you won't do for a school.
"Have you had the small-pox? No. Then you
"won't do for a school. Can you lie three in a
"bed? No. Then you will never do for a school.
"Have you got a good stomach? Yes. Then you
"will by no means do for a school. No, Sir, if
"you are for a genteel easy profession, bind yourself
"seven years as an apprentice to turn a cutler's
"wheel; but avoid a school by any means. But
"come (continued he), I see you are a lad of spirit
"and some learning, what do you think of com-
"mencing author, like me? You have read in
"books, no doubt, of men of genius starving at the
"trade; but at present I'll shew you forty very dull
"fellows about town that live by its opulence. All
"honest jog-trot men, who go on smoothly and
"dully, and write history and politics, are praised;
"and who, had they been bred cobblers, would all
"their lives have only mended shoes, but never
"made them."

"Finding that there was no great degree of gen-

" tility affixed to the character of an usher, I resolved
 " to accept his proposal ; and, having the highest re-
 " spect for literature, I hailed the *antiqua mater* of
 " Grubstreet with reverence. I thought it my glory
 " to pursue a track which Dryden and Otway trod
 " before me. In fact, I considered the goddess of
 " this region as the parent of excellence ; and, how-
 " ever an intercourse with the world might give
 " us good sense, the poverty she granted was the
 " nurse of genius ! Big with these reflections, I
 " sat down, and, finding that the best things re-
 " mained to be said on the wrong side, I resolved to
 " write a book that should be wholly new. I there-
 " fore dressed up three paradoxes with some inge-
 " nuity. They were false, indeed, but they were
 " new. The jewels of truth have been so often
 " imported by others, that nothing was left for
 " me to import but some splendid things that at a
 " distance looked every bit as well. Witness, ye
 " powers, what fancied importance sat perched upon
 " my quill while I was writing. The whole learn-
 " ed world, I made no doubt, would rise to oppose
 " my systems ; but then I was prepared to oppose
 " the whole learned world. Like the porcupine, I
 " sat self-collected, with a quill pointed against eve-
 " ry opposer."

" Well said, my boy," cried I ; " and what sub-
 " ject did you treat upon ? I hope you did not pass
 " over the importance of hierarchal monogamy.
 " But I interrupt ; go on : You published your pa-

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"paradoxes ; well, and what did the learned world say
"say to your paradoxes?"

"Sir," replied my son, " the learned world said
"nothing to my paradoxes ; nothing at all, Sir.
"Every man of them was employed in praising his
"friends and himself, or condemning his enemies ;
"and unfortunately, as I had neither, I suffered the
"cruellest mortification, neglect.

"As I was meditating one day in a coffee-house
"on the fate of my paradoxes, a little man happen-
"ing to enter the room, placed himself in the box
"before me, and, after some preliminary discourse,
"finding me to be a scholar, drew out a bundle of
"proposals, begging me to subscribe to a new edition
"he was going to give the world of Propertius, with
"notes. This demand necessarily produced a reply
"that I had no money ; and that confession led him
"on to inquire into the nature of my expectations.
"Finding that my expectations were just as great
"as my purse, I see, cried he, you are unacquainted
"with the town ; I'll teach you a part of it. Look
"at these proposals ; upon these very proposals I
"have subsisted very comfortably for twelve years.
"The moment a nobleman returns from his travels,
"a Creolian arrives from Jamaica, or a dowager
"from her country seat, I strike for a subscription.
"I first besiege their hearts with flattery, and then
"pour in my proposals at the breach. If they sub-
"scribe readily the first time, I renew my request to

"beg a dedication fee. If they let me have that,
 "I smite them once more for engraving their coats
 "of arms at the top. Thus, continued he, I live by
 "vanity, and laugh at it. But, between ourselves,
 "I am now too well known, I should be glad to
 "borrow your face a bit: a nobleman of distinction
 "has just returned from Italy; my face is familiar
 "to his porter; but, if you bring this copy of
 "verses, my life for it you succeed, and we divide
 "the spoil."

"Bless us, George," cried I; "and is that the
 "employment of poets now! Do men of their ex-
 "alted talents thus stoop to beggary! Can they
 "so far disgrace their calling, as to make a vile traf-
 "fic of praise for bread?"

"O no, Sir," returned he, "a true poet can ne-
 "ver be so base; for wherever there is genius there
 "is pride. The creatures I now describe are only
 "beggars in rhyme. The real poet, as he braves
 "every hardship for fame, so he is equally a coward
 "to contempt, and none but those who are unworthy
 "protection condescend to solicit it.

"Having a mind too proud to stoop to such in-
 "dignities, and yet a fortune too humble to hazard
 "a second attempt for fame, I was now obliged to
 "take a middle course, and write for bread. But
 "was unqualified for a profession where mere in-
 "dustry alone could ensure success. I could not

" suppress my lurking passion for applause ; but
" usually consumed that time in efforts after excel-
" lence, which takes up but little room, when it
" should have been more advantageously employed
" in the diffusive productions of fruitful mediocrity.
" My little piece would come forth in the midst of
" periodical publications unnoticed and unknown.
" The public were more importantly employed than
" to observe the easy simplicity of my style, or the
" harmony of my periods. Sheet after sheet was
" thrown off to oblivion. My essays were buried
" among the essays upon liberty, eastern tales, and
" cures for the bite of a mad dog ; while Philautos,
" Philalethes, Philelutheros, and Philanthropos, all
" wrote better, because they wrote faster than I.

" Now, therefore, I began to associate with none
" but disappointed authors, like myself, who praised,
" deplored, and despised each other. The satisfaction
" they found in every celebrated writer's attempts,
" was inversely as their merits. I found that no
" genius in another could please me. My unfortu-
" nate paradoxes had entirely dried up that source
" of comfort. I could neither read nor write with
" satisfaction ; for excellence in another was my
" aversion, and writing was my trade.

" In the midst of these gloomy reflections, as I
" was one day sitting on a bench in St James's Park,
" a young gentleman of distinction, who had been
" my intimate acquaintance at the university, ap-

"proached me. We saluted each other with some
"hesitation, he almost ashamed of being known to
"one who made so shabby an appearance, and I
"afraid of a repulse. But my suspicions soon va-
"nished; for Ned Thornhill was at the bottom a
"very good-natured fellow."

"What did you say, George?" interrupted I,
"Thornhill, was not that his name? It can cer-
"tainly be no other than my landlord." "Bless
"me," cried Mrs Arnold, "is Mr Thornhill so
"near a neighbour of yours! He has long been a
"friend in our family, and we expect a visit from
"him shortly."

"My friend's first care," continued my son, "was
"to alter my appearance by a very fine suit of his
"own clothes, and then I was admitted to his table
"upon the footing of half friend half underling. My
"business was to attend him at auctions, to put him
"in spirits when he sat for his picture, to take the
"left hand in his chariot when not filled by another
"and to assist at tattering a kip, as the phrase was
"when we had a mind to a frolic. Besides these,
"I had twenty other little employments in the family.
"I was to do many small things without bidding
"to carry the cork-screw; to stand godfather to
"all the butler's children; to sing when I was bid
"to be never out of humour; always to be humble;
"and, if I could, to be happy."

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"In this honourable post, however, I was not
"without a rival. A captain of marines, who seem-
"ed formed for the place by nature, opposed me in
"my patron's affections. His mother had been
"laundress to a man of quality, and thus he early
"acquired a taste for pimping and pedigree. As
"this gentleman made it the study of his life to be
"acquainted with lords, though he was dismissed
"from several for his stupidity, yet he found many
"of them who permitted his assiduities, being as dull
"as himself. As flattery was his trade, he prac-
"tised it with the easiest address imaginable; but it
"came awkward and stiff from me; and, as every
"day my patron's desire of flattery increased, so eve-
"ry hour being better acquainted with his defects,
"I became more unwilling to give it. Thus I was
"once more fairly going to give up the field to the
"captain, when my friend found occasion for my
"assistance. This was nothing less than to fight a
"duel for him, with a gentleman whose sister it was
"pretended he had used ill. I readily complied
"with his request; and, though I see you are dis-
"pleased at my conduct, yet, as it was a debt in-
"dispensibly due to friendship, I could not refuse.
"I undertook the affair, disarmed my antagonist,
"and soon after had the pleasure of finding, that the
"lady was only a woman of the town, and the fel-
"low her bully and a sharper. This piece of service
"was repaid with the warmest professions of grati-
"tude: but, as my friend was to leave town in a
"few days, he knew no other way to serve me,

“ but by recommending me to his uncle Sir William
“ Thornhill, and another nobleman of great distinc-
“ tion, who enjoyed a post under the government.
“ When he was gone, my first care was to carry his
“ recommendatory letter to his uncle, a man whose
“ character for every virtue was universal, yet just.
“ I was received by his servants with the most hos-
“ pitable smiles; for the looks of the domestics ever
“ transmit their master’s benevolence. Being shewn
“ into a grand apartment, where Sir William soon
“ came to me, I delivered my message and letter,
“ which he read; and, after pausing some minutes,
“ Pray, Sir, cried he, inform me what you have
“ done for my kinsman, to deserve this warm re-
“ commendation? But I suppose, Sir, I guess at
“ your merits; you have fought for him; and so
“ you would expect a reward from me for being the
“ instrument of his vices. I wish, sincerely wish,
“ that my present refusal may be some punishment
“ for your guilt, but still more, that it may be
“ some inducement to your repentance. The seve-
“ rity of this rebuke I bore patiently, because I
“ knew it was just. My whole expectations now,
“ therefore, lay in my letter to the great man. As
“ the doors of the nobility are almost ever beset with
“ beggars, all ready to thrust in some sly petition, I
“ found it no easy matter to gain admittance. How-
“ ever, after bribing the servants with half my
“ worldly fortune, I was at last shewn into a spa-
“ cious apartment, my letter being previously sent
“ up for his Lordship’s inspection. During this

"anxious interval, I had full time to look round
"me. Every thing was grand, and of happy contrivance; the paintings, the furniture, the gildings, petrified me with awe, and raised my idea of the owner. Ah! thought I to myself, how very great must the possessor of all these things be, who carries in his head the business of the state, and whose house displays half the wealth of a kingdom: sure his genius must be unfathomable! During these awful reflections, I heard a step come heavily forward. Ah! this is the great man himself! No, it was only a chambermaid. Another foot was heard soon after. This must be he! No, it was only the great man's valet-de-chambre. At last his Lordship actually made his appearance. Are you, cried he, the bearer of this here letter? I answered with a bow. I learn by this, continued he, as how that——But just at that instant a servant delivered him a card, and, without taking farther notice, he went out of the room, and left me to digest my own happiness at leisure. I saw no more of him, till told by a footman that his Lordship was going to his coach at the door. Down I immediately followed, and joined my voice to that of three or four more, who came, like me, to petition for favours. His Lordship, however, went too fast for us, and was gaining his chariot door with large strides, when I hallooed out to know if I was to have any reply. He was by this time got in, and muttered an answer, half of which only I heard, the other half was lost in the

“ rattling of his chariot wheels. I stood for some
“ time with my neck stretched out, in the posture
“ of one that was listening to catch the glorious
“ sounds, till, looking round me, I found myself
“ alone at his Lordship’s gate.

“ My patience,” continued my son, “ was now
“ quite exhausted : stung with the thousand indig-
“ nities I had met with, I was willing to cast myself
“ away, and only wanted the gulph to receive me.
“ I regarded myself as one of those vile things that
“ nature designed should be thrown by into her
“ lumber room, there to perish in unpitied obscuri-
“ ty. I had still, however, half a guinea left, and
“ of that I thought Fortune herself should not de-
“ prive me : but, in order to be sure of this, I was
“ resolved to go instantly and spend it while I had
“ it, and trust to occurrences for the rest. As I
“ was going along with this resolution, it happened
“ that Mr Cripse’s office seemed invitingly open to
“ give me a welcome reception. In this office Mr
“ Cripse kindly offers all his Majesty’s subjects a ge-
“ nerous offer of thirty pounds a-year ; for which
“ promise all they give in return is their liberty for
“ life, and permission to let him transport them to
“ America as slaves. I was happy at finding a place
“ where I could lose my fears in desperation, and
“ therefore entered this cell ; for it had the appear-
“ ance of one, being damp, dark, and dirty. Here
“ I found a number of poor creatures all in circum-
“ stances like myself, expecting the arrival of Mr

“Cripse, presenting a true epitome of English im-
“patience. Each untractable soul at variance with
“Fortune wreaked her injuries on their own hearts:
“but Mr Cripse at last came down, and all our mur-
“murs were hushed. He deigned to regard me with
“an air of peculiar approbation; and indeed he was
“the first man who for a month past talked to me
“with smiles. After a few questions, he found I
“was fit for every thing in the world. He paused a
“while upon the properest means of providing for
“me, and flapping his forehead, as if he had found it,
“assured me, that there was at that time an embas-
“sy talked of from the synod of Pennsylvania to
“the Chickasaw Indians, and that he would use his
“interest to get me made secretary. I knew in my
“heart that the fellow lied, and yet his promise
“gave me pleasure, there was something so magni-
“ficent in the sound. I fairly, therefore, divided
“my half guinea, one half of which went to be
“added to his thirty thousand pounds, and with the
“other half I resolved to go to the next tavern, to
“be there more happy than he.

“As I was going out with that resolution, I was
“met at the door by the captain of a ship, with
“whom I had formerly some little acquaintance,
“and he agreed to be my companion over a bowl
“of punch. As I never chose to make a secret of
“my circumstances, he assured me that I was upon
“the very point of ruin, in listening to the office-
“keeper’s promises; for that he only designed to

“fell me to the plantations. But, continued he, I
“fancy you might, by a much shorter voyage, be
“very easily put into a genteel way of bread. Take
“my advice. My ship sails to-morrow for Am-
“sterdam: What if you go in her as a passenger?
“The moment you land, all you have to do is to
“teach the Dutchmen English, and I’ll warrant
“you’ll get pupils and money enough. I suppose
“you understand English, added he, by this time,
“or the deuce is in it. I confidently assured him of
“that; but expressed a doubt whether the Dutch
“would be willing to learn English. He affirmed
“with an oath that they were fond of it to distract-
“tion; and upon that affirmation I agreed with his
“proposal, and embarked the next day to teach the
“Dutch English in Holland. The wind was fair,
“our voyage short; and, after having paid my pas-
“sage with half my moveables, I found myself
“fallen as from the skies, a stranger in one of the
“principal streets of Amsterdam. In this situation,
“I was unwilling to let any time pass unemployed
“in teaching: I addressed myself, therefore, to two
“or three of those I met, whose appearance seemed
“most promising; but it was impossible to make
“ourselves mutually understood. It was not till
“this very moment I recollected, that, in order to
“teach Dutchmen English, it was necessary that
“they should first teach me Dutch. How I came
“to overlook so obvious an objection, is to me
“amazing; but certain it is I overlooked it.

" This scheme thus blown up, I had some
" thoughts of fairly shipping back to England
" again; but happening into company with an Irish
" student, who was returning from Louvain, our
" conversation turning upon topics of literature (for
" by the way it may be observed, that I always for-
" got the meanness of my circumstances when I
" could converse upon such subjects), from him I
" learned that there were not two men in his whole
" university who understood Greek. This amazed
" me. I instantly resolved to travel to Louvain,
" and there live by teaching Greek; and in this de-
" sign I was heartened by my brother student, who
" threw out some hints that a fortune might be got
" by it.

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" I set boldly forward the next morning. Every
" day lessened the burden of my moveables, like
" Æsop and his basket of bread; for I paid them
" for my lodgings to the Dutch as I travelled on.
" When I came to Louvain, I was resolved not to
" go sneaking to the lower professors, but openly
" tendered my talents to the principal himself. I
" went, had admittance, offered him my service as a
" master of the Greek language, which I had been
" told was a *desideratum* in his university. The prin-
" cipal seemed at first to doubt of my abilities;
" but of these I offered to convince him, by turn-
" ing a part of any Greek author he should fix
" upon into Latin. Finding me perfectly earnest in
" my proposal, he addressed me thus. You see me,

“ young man, continued he, I never learned Greek,
 “ and I don’t find that I ever missed it. I have had
 “ a doctor’s cap and gown without Greek ; I have
 “ ten thousand florins a-year without Greek ; and I
 “ eat heartily without Greek. In short, continued
 “ he, I don’t know Greek, and I do not believe
 “ there is any use in it.”

“ I was now too far from home to think of re-
 “ turning ; so I resolved to go forward. I had some
 “ knowledge of music, with a tolerable voice, and
 “ now turned what was once my amusement into a
 “ present means of bare subsistence. I passed among
 “ the harmless peasants of Flanders, and among such
 “ of the French as were poor enough to be very
 “ merry ; for I ever found them sprightly in pro-
 “ portion to their wants. Whenever I approached
 “ a peasant’s house towards night-fall, I played one
 “ of my most merry tunes, and that procured me
 “ not only a lodging, but subsistence for the next
 “ day. I once or twice attempted to play for people
 “ of fashion ; but they still thought my performance
 “ odious, and never rewarded me even with a trifle.
 “ This was to me the more extraordinary, as when-
 “ ever I used formerly to play for company, when
 “ playing was my amusement, my music never fail-
 “ ed to throw them into raptures, and the ladies
 “ especially ; but, as it was now my only means,
 “ it was received with contempt : a proof how
 “ ready the world is to under-rate those talents which
 “ a man lives by.

"In this manner I proceeded to Paris, with no
"design but just to look about me, and then to go
"forward. The people of Paris are much fonder of
"strangers that have money than of those that have
"wit. You may imagine, then, as I could not boast
"much of either, that I was no great favourite. Af-
"ter I had walked about the town four or five days,
"and seen the outsidés of the best houses, I was pre-
"paring to leave this retreat of venal hospitality,
"when, passing through one of the principal streets,
"whom should I meet but our cousin, to whom
"you first recommended me. This meeting was
"very agreeable to me, and, I believe, not dis-
"pleasing to him. He inquired into the nature of
"my journey to Paris, and informed me of his bu-
"siness there, which was to collect pictures, me-
"dals, intaglios, and antiques of all kinds, for a
"gentleman in London, who had just slept into taste
"and a large fortune. I was still more surpriséd at
"seeing our cousin pitched upon for this office, as
"himself had often assured me he knew nothing of
"the matter. Upon my asking how he had been
"taught the art of a *connoisseur* so very suddenly,
"he assured me, that nothing was more easy. The
"whole secret consisted in a strict adherence to two
"rules; the one always to observe, that the picture
"might have been better if the painter had taken
"more pains; and the other, to praise the works of
"Pietro Perugeno. But, says he, as I once taught
"you how to be an author in London, I'll now

“ undertake to instruct you in the art of picture-
“ buying at Paris.

“ With this proposal I very readily closed, as it
“ was a living, and now all my ambition was to
“ live. I went therefore to his lodgings, improved
“ my dress by his assistance, and, after some time,
“ accompanied him to auctions of pictures, where
“ the English gentry were expected to be purchasers.
“ I was not a little surprised at his intimacy with
“ people of the best fashion, who referred themselves
“ to his judgement upon every picture or medal, as
“ to an unerring standard of taste. He made very
“ good use of my assistance upon these occasions;
“ for, when asked his opinion, he would gravely
“ take me aside, and ask mine, shrug, look wise,
“ return and assure the company, that he could give
“ no opinion upon an affair of such importance.
“ Yet there was sometimes an occasion for a more
“ supported assurance. I remember to have seen
“ him, after giving his opinion that the colouring
“ of a picture was not mellow enough, very delibe-
“ rately take a brush with brown varnish that was
“ accidentally lying in the place, and rub it over
“ the piece, with great composure, before all the
“ company, and then ask if he had not improved the
“ tints.

“ When he had finished his commission in Paris,
“ he left me strongly recommended to several men
“ of distinction, as a person very proper for a tra-

“velling tutor ; and I was, after some time, employed in that capacity by a gentleman who brought his ward to Paris, in order to set him forward on his tour through Europe. I was to be the young gentleman’s governor, with this injunction, that he should always be permitted to direct himself. My pupil, in fact, understood the art of guiding, in money concerns, much better than I. He was heir to a fortune of about two hundred thousand pounds, left him by an uncle in the West Indies ; and his guardians, to qualify him for the management of it, had bound him an apprentice to an attorney. Thus avarice was his prevailing passion : and all his questions on the road were how money might be saved ; which was the least expensive course of travel ; whether any thing could be bought that would turn to account when disposed of again in London. Such curiosities on the way as could be seen for nothing he was ready enough to look at ; but, if the sight was to be paid for, he usually asserted, that he had been told it was not worth seeing. He never paid a bill, that he would not observe, how amazingly expensive travelling was ; and all this, though he was not yet come to the age of twenty-one. When arrived at Leghorn, as we took a walk to look at the port and shipping, he inquired the expence of the passage by sea home to England. This, he was informed, was but a trifle, compared to his returning by land : he was therefore unable to withstand the temptation ; so pay-

“ ing me the small part of my salary that was then
 “ due, he took leave, and embarked, with only one
 “ attendant, for London.

“ I now, therefore, was left once more upon the
 “ world at large ; but then it was a thing I was
 “ used to. However, my skill in music could avail
 “ me nothing in a country where every peasant
 “ was a better musician than I ; but by this time I
 “ had acquired another talent, which answered my
 “ purpose as well, and this was a skill in disputa-
 “ tion. In all the foreign universities and convents,
 “ there are, upon certain days, philosophical theses
 “ maintained against every adventitious disputant,
 “ for which, if the champion opposes with any dex-
 “ terity, he can claim a gratuity in money, a dinner,
 “ and a bed for one night. In this manner, there-
 “ fore, I fought my way towards England, walked
 “ along from city to city, examined mankind more
 “ nearly, and, if I may so express it, saw both sides
 “ of the picture. My remarks, however, were few:
 “ I found that monarchy was the best government
 “ for the poor to live in, and commonwealths for
 “ the rich. I found that riches, in general, were
 “ in every country another name for freedom ; and
 “ that no man is so fond of freedom himself, that
 “ would not choose to subject the will of some indi-
 “ viduals of society to his own.

“ Upon my arrival in England, I resolved to pay
 “ my respects first to you, and then to enlist as a

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"volunteer in the first expedition that was sent
"out: but, on my journey down, my resolutions
"were changed, by meeting an old acquaintance,
"who, I found, belonged to a company of come-
"dians, that were going to make a summer cam-
"paign in the country. The company seemed not
"much to disapprove of me for an associate. They
"all, however, apprised me of the importance of
"the task at which I aimed; that the public was a
"many-headed monster, and that only such as had
"very good heads could please it; that acting was
"not to be learnt in a day; and that without some
"traditional shrugs, which had been on the stage,
"and only on the stage, these hundred years, I could
"never pretend to please. The next difficulty was
"in fitting me with parts, as almost every charac-
"ter was in keeping. I was driven, for some time,
"from one character to another, till at last Horatio
"was fixed upon, which the presence of this present
"company, happily hindered me from acting."

CHAP. II.

THE SHORT CONTINUANCE OF FRIENDSHIP AMONG
THE VICIOUS, WHICH IS COEVAL ONLY WITH MU-
TUAL SATISFACTION.

MY son's account was too long to be delivered
at once: the first part of it was begun that
night, and he was concluding the rest after dinner.

the next day, when the appearance of Mr Thornhill's equipage at the door seemed to make a pause in the general satisfaction. The butler, who was now become my friend in the family, informed me with a whisper, that the squire had already made some overtures to Miss Wilmot, and that her aunt and uncle seemed highly to approve the match. Upon Mr Thornhill's entering, he seemed, at seeing my son and me, to start back; but I readily imputed that to surprise, and not displeasure. However, upon our advancing to salute him, he returned our greeting with the most apparent candour; and, after a short time, his presence seemed only to increase the general good humour.

After tea he called me aside, to inquire after my daughter; but, upon my informing him that my inquiry was unsuccessful, he seemed greatly surprised, adding, that he had been since frequently at my house, in order to comfort the rest of my family, whom he left perfectly well. He then asked if I had communicated her misfortune to Miss Wilmot, or my son; and, upon my replying that I had not told them as yet, he greatly approved my prudence and precaution, desiring me, by all means, to keep it a secret: "For at best," cried he, "it is but divulging one's own infamy; and perhaps Miss Livvy may not be so guilty as we all imagine." We were here interrupted by a servant, who came to ask the squire in, to stand up at country-dances; so that he left me quite pleased with the interest he

seemed to take in my concerns. His addresses, however, to Miss Wilmot, were too obvious to be mistaken; and yet she seemed not perfectly pleased, but bore them rather in compliance to the will of her aunt, than from real inclination. I had even the satisfaction to see her lavish some kind looks upon my unfortunate son, which the other could neither extort by his fortune nor assiduity. Mr Thornhill's seeming composure, however, not a little surprised me: we had now continued here a week, at the pressing instances of Mr Arnold; but each day, the more tenderness Miss Wilmot showed my son, Mr Thornhill's friendship seemed proportionably to increase for him.

He had formerly made us the most kind assurances of using his interest to serve the family; but now his generosity was not confined to promises alone: the morning I designed for my departure, Mr Thornhill came to me with looks of real pleasure, to inform me of a piece of service he had done for his friend George. This was nothing less than his having procured him an ensign's commission in one of the regiments that was going to the West Indies, for which he had promised but one hundred pounds, his interest having been sufficient to get an abatement of the other two. "As for this trifling piece of service," continued the young gentleman, "I desire no other reward but the pleasure of having served my friend; and as for the hundred pounds to be paid, if you are unable to raise it yourselves, I will

“advance it, and you shall repay me at your leisure. This was a favour we wanted words to express our sense of: I readily, therefore, gave my bond for the money, and testified as much gratitude as if I never intended to pay.

George was to depart for town the next day to secure his commission, in pursuance of his generous patron's directions, who judged it highly expedient to use dispatch, lest in the mean time another should step in with more advantageous proposals. The next morning, therefore, our young soldier was early prepared for his departure, and seemed the only person among us that was not affected by it. Neither the fatigues and dangers he was going to encounter, nor the friends and mistress (for Miss Wilmot actually loved him) he was leaving behind, any way damped his spirits. After he had taken leave of the rest of the company, I gave him all I had, my blessing. “And now, my boy,” cried I, “thou art going to fight for thy country, remember how thy brave grandfather fought for his sacred king, when loyalty among Britons was a virtue. Go, my boy, and imitate him in all but his misfortunes, if it was a misfortune to die with Lord Falkland. Go, my boy, and if you fall, though distant, exposed and unwept by those that love you, the most precious tears are those with which heaven bedews the unburied head of a soldier.”

The next morning I took leave of the good fami-

ly that had been kind enough to entertain me so long, not without several expressions of gratitude to Mr Thornhill for his late bounty. I left them in the enjoyment of all that happiness which affluence and good-breeding procure, and returned towards home, despairing of ever finding my daughter more, but sending a sigh to heaven to spare and to forgive her. I was now come within about twenty miles of home, having hired a horse to carry me, as I was yet but weak, and comforted myself with the hopes of soon seeing all I held dearest upon earth. But the night coming on, I put up at a little public-house by the road side, and asked for the landlord's company over a pint of wine. We sat beside his kitchen fire, which was the best room in the house, and chatted on politics and the news of the country. We happened, among other topics, to talk of young squire Thornhill, whom the host assured me was hated as much as an uncle of his, who sometimes came down to the country, was loved. He went on to observe, that he made it his whole study to betray the daughters of such as received him to their houses, and, after a fortnight or three weeks possession, he turned them out unrewarded and abandoned to the world. As we continued our discourse in this manner, his wife, who had been out to get change, returned, and, perceiving that her husband was enjoying a pleasure in which she was not a sharer, she asked him, in an angry tone, what he did there? to which he only replied in an ironical way, by drinking her health. "Mr Symmonds, cried she,

"you use me very ill, and I'll bear it no longer.
"Here three parts of the business is left for me to
"do, and the fourth left unfinished; while you do
"nothing but soak with the guests all day long,
"whereas, if a spoonful of liquor were to cure me
"of a fever, I never touch a drop." I now found
what she would be at, and immediately poured
her out a glass, which she received with a courtesy,
and, drinking towards my good health, "Sir," re-
sumed she, "it is not so much for the value of the
"liquor I am angry; but one cannot help it when
"the house is going out of the windows. If the cus-
"tomers or guests are to be dunned, all the burden
"lies upon my back; he'd as lief eat that glass as
"budge after them himself. There now, above stairs,
"we have a young woman who has come to take up
"her lodgings here, and I don't believe she has got
"any money, by her over-civility. I am certain
"she is very slow of payment, and I wish she were
"put in mind of it."—"What signifies minding
"her," cried the host, "if she be slow she is sure."
"I don't know that," replied the wife; but I know
"that I am sure she has been here a fortnight, and
"we have not seen the cross of her money."—"I
"suppose, my dear," cried he, "we shall have it all
"in a lump."—"In a lump!" cried the other, "I
"hope we may get it any way; and that I am re-
"solved we shall have this very night, or out she
"tramps, bag and baggage."—"Consider, my dear,"
cried the husband, "she is a gentlewoman, and de-
"serves more respect."—"As for the matter of

“that,” returned the hostess, “gentle or simple, out she shall pack with a fassarara. Gentry may be good things where they take; but, for my part, I never saw much good of them at the sign of the Harrow.”

Thus saying, she ran up a narrow flight of stairs, that went from the kitchen to a room over-head; and I soon perceived, by the loudness of her voice, and the bitterness of her reproaches, that no money was to be had from her lodger. I could hear her remonstrances very distinctly. “Out I say, pack out this moment, tramp, thou infamous strumpet, or I’ll give thee a mark thou wilt be the better for these three months. What! you trumpery, to come and take up an honest house, without cross or coin to bless yourself with; come along, I say.—“O dear Madam,” cried the stranger, “pity me; pity a poor abandoned creature for one night, and death will soon do the rest.”—I instantly knew the voice of my poor ruined child Olivia. I flew to her rescue, while the woman was dragging her along by the hair, and caught the dear forlorn wretch in my arms.—“Welcome, any way welcome, my dearest lost one, my treasure, to your poor old father’s bosom. Though the vicious forsake thee, there is yet one in the world that will never forsake thee; though thou hadst ten thousand crimes to answer for, he will forget them all.” “O my own dear”—for some minutes she could no more——“my own dearest good Papa! Could

"angels be kinder ! how do I deserve so much !
 "The villain, I hate him and myself, to be a re-
 "proach to such goodness. You can't forgive me :
 "I know you cannot."—"Yes, my child, from my
 "heart I do forgive thee ! Only repent, and we
 "both shall yet be happy. We shall see many plea-
 "sant days yet, my Olivia."—"Ah ! never, Sir,
 "never. The rest of my wretched life must be in-
 "famy abroad, and shame at home. But, alas !
 "Papa, you look much paler than you used to do.
 "Could such a thing as I am give you so much un-
 "easiness ? Sure you have too much wisdom to
 "take the miseries of my guilt upon yourself."—
 "Our wisdom, young woman," replied I—"Ah !
 "why so cold a name, Papa ?" cried she. "This is
 "the first time you ever called me by so cold a
 "name."—"I ask pardon, my darling," returned I ;
 "but I was going to observe, that wisdom makes
 "but a slow defence against trouble, though at last
 "a sure one."

The landlady now returned to know if we did
 not choose a more genteel apartment ; to which as-
 senting, we were shewn a room where we could
 converse more freely. After we had talked our-
 selves into some degree of tranquillity, I could not
 avoid desiring some account of the gradations that
 led to her present wretched situation. "That vil-
 "lain, Sir," said she, "from the first day of our
 "meeting, made me honourable, though private
 "proposals."

“Villain indeed!” cried I; “and yet it in some measure surprises me, how a person of Mr Burchell’s good sense and seeming honour could be guilty of such deliberate baseness, and thus step into a family to undo it.”

“My dear Papa,” returned my daughter, “you labour under a strange mistake; Mr Burchell never attempted to deceive me. Instead of that, he took every opportunity of privately admonishing me against the artifices of Mr Thornhill, who, now I find, was even worse than he represented him.”—“Mr Thornhill!” interrupted I, “can it be?”—“Yes, Sir,” returned she, “it was Mr Thornhill who seduced me, who employed the two ladies, as he called them, but who, in fact, were abandoned women of the town, without breeding or pity, to decoy us up to London. Their artifices, you may remember, would have certainly succeeded, but for Mr Burchell’s letter, who directed those reproaches at them which we all applied to ourselves. How he came to have so much influence as to defeat their intentions still remains a secret to me; but I am convinced he was ever our warmest sincerest friend.”

“You amaze me, my dear,” cried I: “but now I find my first suspicions of Mr Thornhill’s baseness were too well grounded: But he can triumph in security; for he is rich, and we are poor. But tell me, my child, sure it was no small tempta-

“tion that could thus obliterate all the impressions
“of such an education, and so virtuous a disposition
“as thine.”

“Indeed, Sir,” replied she, “he owes all his
“triumph to the desire I had of making him, and not
“myself, happy. I knew that the ceremony of
“our marriage, which was privately performed by
“a Popish priest, was no way binding, and that I
“had nothing to trust to but his honour.” “What!”
interrupted I; and were you indeed married by a
“priest, and in orders?” “Indeed, Sir, we were,”
replied she, “though we were both sworn to con-
“ceal his name.”—“Why, then, my child, come
“to my arms again: and now you are a thousand
“times more welcome than before; for you are
“now his wife to all intents and purposes; nor can
“all the laws of man, though written upon tables
“of adamant, lessen the force of that sacred connec-
“tion.”

“Alas! Papa,” replied she, “you are but little
“acquainted with his villanies: he has been mar-
“ried already, by the same priest, to six or eight
“wives more, whom, like me, he has deceived and
“abandoned.”

“Has he so?” cried I; “then we must hang the
“priest, and you shall inform against him to-mor-
“row.” “But, Sir,” returned she, “will that be
“right, when I am sworn to secrecy?” “My dear,”

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I replied, "if you have made such a promise, I cannot, nor will not, tempt you to break it. Even though it may benefit the public, you must not inform against him. In all human institutions, a smaller evil is allowed to procure a greater good; as in politics, a province may be given away to secure a kingdom; in medicine, a limb may be lopt off to preserve the body. But, in religion, the law is written, and inflexible, *never* to do evil. And this law, my child, is right: for otherwise, if we commit a smaller evil, to procure a greater good, certain guilt would be thus incurred, in expectation of a contingent advantage: and, though the advantage should certainly follow, yet the interval between commission and advantage, which is allowed to be guilty, may be that in which we are called away to answer for the things we have done, and the volume of human actions is closed for ever. But I interrupt you, my dear, go on."

"The very next morning," continued she, "I found what little expectations I was to have from his sincerity. That very morning he introduced me to two unhappy women more, whom, like me, he had deceived, but who lived in contented prostitution. I loved him too tenderly to bear such rivals in his affections, and strove to forget my infamy in a tumult of pleasures. With this view, I danced, dressed, and talked; but still was unhappy. The gentlemen who visited there told

" me every moment of the power of my charms,
 " and this only contributed to increase my melan-
 " choly, as I had thrown all their power quite away.
 " Thus each day I grew more pensive, and he more
 " insolent, till at last the monster had the assurance to
 " offer me to a young baronet of his acquaintance.
 " Need I describe, Sir, how his ingratitude stung
 " me? My answer to this proposal was almost
 " madness. I desired to part. As I was going, he
 " offered me a purse; but I flung it at him with in-
 " dignation, and burst from him in a rage, that for
 " a while kept me insensible of the miseries of my
 " situation. But I soon looked round me, and saw
 " myself a vile, abject, guilty thing, without one
 " friend in the world to apply to.

" Just in that interval, a stage coach happening
 " to pass by, I took a place, it being my only aim
 " to be driven at a distance from a wretch I despised
 " and detested. I was set down here, where, since
 " my arrival, my own anxiety and this woman's
 " unkindness have been my only companions. The
 " hours of pleasure that I have passed with my
 " mamma and sister now grow painful to me. Their
 " sorrows are much, but mine are greater than
 " theirs; for mine is guilt and infamy.

" Have patience, my child," cried I, " and I hope
 " things will yet be better. Take some repose to-
 " night, and to-morrow I will carry you home to
 " your mother, and the rest of the family, from

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"whom you will receive a kind reception. Poor woman, this has gone to her heart: but she loves you still, Olivia, and will forget it."

C H A P. III.

OFFENCES ARE EASILY PARDONED WHERE THERE IS
LOVE AT BOTTOM.

THE next morning I took my daughter behind me, and set out on my return home. As we travelled along, I strove by every persuasion to calm her sorrows and fears, and to arm her with resolution to bear the presence of her offended mother. I took every opportunity, from the prospect of a fine country, through which we passed, to observe how much kinder Heaven was to us than we were to each other, and that the misfortunes of Nature's making were very few. I assured her, that she should never perceive any change in my affections, and that, during my life, which yet might be long, she might depend upon a guardian and an instructor. I armed her against the censures of the world, showed her that books were sweet unrepublishing companions to the miserable, and that, if they could not bring us to enjoy life, they would teach us to endure it.

The hired horse that we rode was to be up that night at an inn by the way, within about five miles from my house: and, as I was willing to prepare

my family for my daughter's reception, I determined to leave her that night at the inn, and to come for her, accompanied by my daughter Sophia, early the next morning. It was night before we reached our appointed stage: However, seeing her provided with a decent apartment, and having ordered the hostess to prepare proper refreshments, I kissed her, and proceeded towards home. My heart caught new sensations the nearer I approached that peaceful mansion. As a bird that has been frightened from its nest, my affections outwent my haste, and hovered round my little fire side with all the rapture of expectation. I called up the many fond things I had to say, and anticipated the welcome I was to receive. I already felt my wife's tender embrace, and smiled at the joy of my little ones. As I walked but slowly, the night waned apace. The labourers of the day were all retired to rest; the lights were out in every cottage; no sounds were heard but of the shrilling cock, and deep-mouthed watch dog at hollow distance. I approached my little abode of pleasure, and before I was within a furlong of the place, our honest mastiff came running to welcome me.

It was now near midnight that I came to knock at my door: all was still and silent: my heart dilated with unutterable happiness, when, to my amazement, the house was bursting out in a blaze of fire, and every aperture was red with conflagration! I gave a loud convulsive outcry, and fell upon the pavement insensible. This alarmed my

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son, who, perceiving the flames, instantly waked my wife and daughter, and all running out naked, and wild with apprehension, recalled me to life with their anguish. But it was only to objects of new terror; for the flames had by this time caught the roof of our dwelling, part after part continuing to fall in, while the family stood, with silent agony, looking on us as if they enjoyed the blaze. I gazed upon them and upon it by turns, and then looked round me for my two little ones; but they were not to be seen. O misery! "Where," cried I, "where are my little ones?"—"They are burnt to death in the flames," says my wife calmly, "and I will die with them." That moment I heard the cry of the babes within, who were just awaked by the fire, and nothing could have stopped me. "Where, where are my children?" cried I, rushing through the flames, and bursting the door of the chamber in which they were confined, "where are my little ones!" "Here, dear Papa, here we are," cried they together, while the flames were catching the bed where they lay. I caught them both in my arms, and snatched them through the fire as fast as possible, while just as I was got out the roof sunk in. "Now," cried I, holding up my children, "now let the flames burn on, and all my possessions perish. Here they are, I have saved my treasure. Here, my dearest, here are our treasures, and we shall yet be happy." We kissed our darlings a thousand times; they clasped round the neck, and seemed to share our trans-

ports, while their mother laughed and wept by turns.

I now stood a calm spectator of the flames, and, after some time, began to perceive that my arm to the shoulder was scorched in a terrible manner. It was therefore out of my power to give my son any assistance, either in attempting to save our goods, or preventing the flames spreading to our corn. By this time the neighbours were alarmed, and came running to our assistance; but all they could do was to stand like us, spectators of the calamity. My goods, among which were the notes I had reserved for my daughters fortunes, were entirely consumed, except a box, with some papers, that stood in the kitchen, and two or three things more of little consequence, which my son brought away in the beginning. The neighbours contributed, however, what they could to lighten our distress. They brought us clothes, and furnished one of our houses with kitchen utensils; so that by day-light we had another, though a wretched dwelling to retire to. My honest next neighbour, and his children, were not the least assiduous in providing us with every thing necessary, and offering whatever consolation untutored benevolence could suggest.

When the fears of my family had subsided, curiosity to know the cause of my long stay began to take place. Having, therefore, informed them of every particular, I proceeded to prepare them for the re-

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ception of our lost one ; and, though we had nothing but wretchedness now to impart, yet to procure her a welcome to what we had. This task would have been more difficult, but for our recent calamity, which had humbled my wife's pride, and blunted it by more poignant afflictions. Being unable to go for my poor child myself, as my arm now grew very painful, I sent my son and daughter, who soon returned, supporting the wretched delinquent, who had not courage to look up at her mother, whom no instructions of mine could persuade to a perfect reconciliation ; for women have a much stronger sense of female error than men.—

"Ah, Madam," cried her mother, "this is but a poor place you are come to after so much finery. My daughter Sophy and I can afford but little entertainment to persons who have kept company only with people of distinction. Yes, Miss Livy, your poor father and I have suffered very much of late ; but I hope Heaven will forgive you." During this reception, the unhappy victim stood pale and trembling, unable to weep or to reply : but I could not continue a silent spectator of her distress : wherefore, assuming a degree of severity in my voice and manner, which was ever followed with instant submission, "I entreat, woman, that my words may be now marked once for all : I have here brought you back a poor deluded wanderer ; her return to duty demands the revival of our tenderness. The real hardships of life are now coming fast upon us ; let us not therefore increase them by

"dissent among each other. If we live harmo-
 "niously together, we may yet be contented, as
 "there are enough of us here to shut out the cen-
 "suring world, and keep each other in countenance.
 "The kindness of Heaven is promised to the peni-
 "tent, and let ours be directed by the example.
 "Heaven, we are assured, is much more pleased to
 "view a repentant sinner, than many persons who
 "have supported a course of undeviating rectitude.
 "And this is right: for the single effort by which
 "we stop short in the down-hill path to perdition,
 "is itself a greater exertion of virtue than a hun-
 "dred acts of justice."

CHAP. IV.

NONE BUT THE GUILTY CAN BE LONG AND COM-
 PLETELY MISERABLE.

SOME assiduity was now required to make our
 present abode as convenient as possible, and we
 were soon again qualified to enjoy our former sere-
 nity. Being disabled myself from assisting my son
 in our usual occupations, I read to my family from
 the few books that were saved, and particularly from
 such as, by amusing the imagination, contributed to
 ease the heart. Our good neighbours, too, came
 every day with the kindest condolence, and fixed a
 time in which they were all to assist at repairing my
 former dwelling. Honest farmer Williams was not

last among these visitors, but heartily offered his friendship. He would even have renewed his addresses to my daughter; but she rejected them in such a manner as totally repressed his future solicitations. Her grief seemed formed for continuing, and she was the only person of our little society that a week did not restore to cheerfulness. She now lost that unblushing innocence which once taught her to respect herself, and to seek pleasure by pleasing. Anxiety now had taken strong possession of her mind, her beauty began to be impaired with her constitution, and neglect still more contributed to diminish it. Every tender epithet bestowed on her sister brought a pang to her heart, and a tear to her eye; and as one vice, though cured, almost ever plants others where it has been, so her former guilt, though driven out by repentance, left jealousy and envy behind. I strove a thousand ways to lessen her care, and even forgot my own pain in a concern of her's, collecting such amusing passages of history, as a strong memory and some reading could suggest. "Our happiness, my dear, I would say, "is in the power of one who can bring it about a thousand unforeseen ways, and mock our foresight. If example be necessary to prove this, I'll give you a story, my child, told us by a grave, though sometimes a romancing historian."

"Matilda was married very young to a Neapolitan nobleman of the first quality, and found herself a widow and a mother at the age of fifteen.

" As she stood one day caressing her infant son in
 " the open window of an apartment, which hung
 " over the river Volturna, the child, with a sudden
 " spring, leaped from her arms into the flood below,
 " and disappeared in a moment. The mother, struck
 " with instant surprise, and making an effort to save
 " him, plunged in after : but, far from being able
 " to assist the infant, she herself with great difficulty
 " escaped to the opposite shore, just when some
 " French were plundering the country on that side,
 " who immediately made her their prisoner.

" As the war was then carried on between the
 " French and Italians with the utmost inhumanity,
 " they were going at once to prepare those two ex-
 " tremes, suggested by appetite and cruelty. This
 " base resolution, however, was opposed by a young
 " officer, who, though their retreat required the utmost
 " expedition, placed her behind him, and brought her
 " in safety to his native city. Her beauty at first
 " caught his eye, but merit soon after his heart.
 " They were married : he rose to the highest posts :
 " they lived long together, and were happy. But the
 " felicity of a soldier can never be called permanent.
 " After an interval of several years, the troops
 " which he commanded having met with a repulse,
 " he was obliged to take shelter in the city where he
 " had lived with his wife. Here they suffered a
 " siege, and the city at length was taken. Few
 " histories can produce more various instances of
 " cruelty than those which the French and Italians

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"at that time exercised upon each other. It was
"resolved by the victors, upon this occasion, to put
"all the French prisoners to death, but particular-
"ly the husband of the unfortunate Matilda, as he
"was principally instrumental in protracting the
"siege. Their determinations were, in general, exe-
"cuted almost as soon as resolved upon. The cap-
"tive soldier was led forth, and the executioner,
"with his sword, stood ready, while the spectators,
"in gloomy silence, awaited the fatal blow, which
"was only suspended till the general, who presided
"as judge, should give the signal. It was in this
"interval of anguish and expectation, that Matilda
"came to take her last farewell of her husband and
"deliverer, deploring her wretched situation, and
"the cruelty of fate, that had saved her from pe-
"rishing by a premature death in the river Vol-
"turna, to be the spectator of still greater calami-
"ties. The general, who was a young man, was
"struck with surprise at her beauty, and pity at her
"distress, but with still stronger emotions, when he
"heard her mention her former dangers. He was
"her son, the infant for whom she had encountered
"so much danger. He acknowledged her at once
"as his mother, and fell at her feet. The rest may
"be easily supposed: the captives were set free, and
"all the happiness that love, friendship, and duty,
"could confer on each, were united."

In this manner I would attempt to amuse my
daughter; but she listened with divided attention;

for her own misfortune engrossed all the pity she once had for those of another, and nothing gave her ease. In company she dreaded contempt, and in solitude she only found anxiety. Such was the colour of her wretchedness, when we received certain information that Mr Thornhill was going to be married to Miss Wilmot, for whom I always suspected he had a real passion, though he took every opportunity, before me, to express his contempt, both of her person and fortune. This news only served to increase poor Olivia's affliction: such a flagrant breach of fidelity was more than her courage could support. I was resolved, however, to get more certain information, and to defeat, if possible, the completion of his designs, by sending my son to old Mr Wilmot's, with instructions, to know the truth of the report, and to deliver Miss Wilmot a letter, intimating Mr Thornhill's conduct in my family. My son went, in pursuance of my directions, and in three days returned, assuring us of the truth of the account; but that he had found it impossible to deliver the letter, which he was therefore obliged to leave, as Mr Thornhill and Miss Wilmot were visiting round the country. They were to be married, he said, in a few days, having appeared together at church, the Sunday before he was there, in great splendour, the bride attended by six young ladies dressed in white, and he by as many gentlemen. Their approaching nuptials filled the whole country with rejoicing, and they usually rode out together in the grandest equipage that had been seen in the

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country for many years. All the friends of both families, he said, were there, particularly the squire's uncle, Sir William Thornhill, who bore so good a character. He added, that nothing but mirth and feasting were going forward; that all the country praised the young bride's beauty, and the bridegroom's fine person, and that they were immensely fond of each other; concluding, that he could not help thinking Mr Thornhill one of the most happy men in the world.

"Why, let him if he can," returned I: "but, my son, observe this bed of straw, and unsheltering roof; those mouldering walls, and humid floor; my wretched body thus disabled by fire, and my children weeping round me for bread; you have come home, my child, to all this, yet here, even here, you see a man that would not for a thousand worlds exchange situations. O my children, if you could but learn to commune with your own hearts, and know what noble company you can make them, you would little regard the elegance and splendours of the worthless. Almost all men have been taught to call life a passage, and themselves the travellers. The similitude still may be improved, when we observe that the good are joyful and serene, like travellers that are going towards home; the wicked but by intervals happy, like travellers that are going into exile."

My compassion for my poor daughter, over-

powered by this new disaster, interrupted what I had farther to observe. I bade her mother support her, and after a short time she recovered. She appeared from this time more calm, and I imagined had gained a new degree of resolution: but appearances deceived me; for her tranquillity was the languor of over-wrought resentment. A supply of provisions, charitably sent us by my kind parishioners, seemed to diffuse cheerfulness amongst the rest of the family; nor was I displeased at seeing them once more sprightly and at ease. It would have been unjust to damp their satisfactions merely to condole with resolute melancholy, or to burden them with a sadness they did not feel. Once more, therefore, the tale went round, and the song was demanded, and cheerfulness condescended to hover round our little habitation.

CHAP. V.

FRESH CALAMITIES.

THE next morning the sun arose with peculiar warmth for the season; so that we agreed to breakfast together at the honeysuckle bank; where, while we sat, my youngest daughter, at my request, joined her voice to the concert on the trees about us. It was here my poor Olivia first met her seducer, and every object served to recal her sadness. But that melancholy which was excited by objects

of pleasure, or inspired by sounds of harmony, soothes the heart, instead of corroding it. Her mother, too, upon this occasion, felt a pleasing distress, and wept and loved her daughter as before. "Do, my pretty Olivia," cried she, "let us have that little melancholy air your Papa was so fond of; your sister Sophy has already obliged us. Do child; it will please your old father." She complied in a manner so exquisitely pathetic as moved me.

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom—is to die.

As she was concluding the last stanza, to which an interruption in her voice from sorrow gave peculiar softness, the appearance of Mr Thornhill's equipage at a distance alarmed us all, but particularly increased the uneasiness of my eldest daughter, who, desirous of shunning her betrayer, returned to the house with her sister. In a few minutes he was alighted from his chariot, and, making up to the place where I was still sitting, inquired after my health with his usual air of familiarity. "Sir," replied I, "your present assurance only serves to

"aggravate the baseness of your character ; and
 "there was a time when I would have chastised
 "your insolence, for presuming thus to appear be-
 "fore me. But now you are safe ; for age has
 "cooled my passions, and my calling restrains
 "them."

"I vow, my dear Sir," returned he, "I am
 "amazed at all this ; nor can I understand what it
 "means ! I hope you don't think your daughter's
 "late excursion with me had any thing criminal in
 "it."

"Go," cried I, "thou art a wretch, a poor pi-
 "tiful wretch, and every way a liar ; but your
 "meanness secures you from my anger ! Yet, Sir,
 "I am descended from a family that would not have
 "borne this ! And so, thou vile thing, to gratify a
 "momentary passion, thou hast made one poor crea-
 "ture wretched for life, and polluted a family that
 "had nothing but honour for their portion."

"If she or you," returned he, "are resolved to
 "be miserable, I cannot help it. But you may still
 "be happy ; and, whatever opinion you may have
 "formed of me, you shall ever find me ready to
 "contribute to it. We can readily marry her to
 "another, and, what is more, she may keep her
 "lover beside ; for I protest I shall ever continue to
 "have a true regard for her."

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I found all my passions awakened at this new degrading proposal; for, though the mind may often be calm under great injuries, little villany can at any time get within the soul, and sting it into rage. "Avoid my sight, thou reptile," cried I, "nor continue to insult me with thy presence. Were my brave son at home, he would not suffer this: but I am old and disabled, and every way undone."

"I find," cried he, "you are bent upon obliging me to talk in a harsher manner than I intended. But, as I have shewn you what may be hoped from my friendship, it may not be improper to represent what may be the consequences of my resentment. My attorney, to whom your late bond has been transferred, threatens hard; nor do I know how to prevent the course of justice, except by paying the money myself, which, as I have been at some expences lately, previous to my intended marriage, is not so easy to be done. And then my steward talks of driving for the rent: it is certain he knows his duty; for I never trouble myself with affairs of that nature. Yet still I could wish to serve you, and even have you and your daughter present at my marriage, which is shortly to be solemnized with Miss Wilmot; it is even the request of my charming Arabella herself, whom I hope you will not refuse."

"Mr Thornhill," replied I, "hear me once for all: As to your marriage with any but my daugh-

“ter, that I never will consent to; and, though
“your friendship could raise me to a throne, or
“your resentment sink me to the grave, yet would
“I despise both. Thou hast once wofully, irrepa-
“rably deceived me. I reposed my heart upon thine
“honour, and have found its baseness. Never more,
“therefore, expect friendship from me. Go, and
“possess what fortune has given thee, beauty, riches,
“health, and pleasure. Go, and leave me to want,
“infamy, disease, and sorrow. Yet, humbled as I
“am, shall my heart still vindicate its dignity, and,
“though thou hast my forgiveness, thou shalt ever
“have my contempt.”

“If so,” returned he, “depend upon it, you shall
“feel the effects of this insolence; and we shall
“shortly see which is the fittest object of scorn, you
“or I.”—Upon which he departed abruptly.

My wife and son, who were present at this interview, seemed terrified with the apprehension. My daughters also, finding that he was gone, came out to be informed of the result of our conference, which, when known, alarmed them not less than the rest. But, as to myself, I disregarded the utmost stretch of his malevolence. He had already struck the blow, and now I stood prepared to repel every new effort; like one of those instruments used in the art of war, which, however thrown, still presents a point to receive the enemy.

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We soon, however, found, that he had not threatened in vain: for the very next day his steward came to demand my annual rent, which, by the train of accidents already related, I was unable to pay. The consequence of my incapacity was his driving my cattle that evening, and their being appraised and sold the next day for less than half their value. My wife and children now therefore entreated me to comply upon any terms, rather than incur certain destruction. They even begged me to admit his visits once more, and used all their little eloquence to paint the calamities I was going to endure; the terrors of a prison in so rigorous a season as the present, with the danger that threatened my health from the late accident that happened by the fire. But I continued inflexible.

"Why, my treasures," cried I, "why will you thus attempt to persuade me to the thing that is not right! My duty has taught me to forgive him; but my conscience will not permit me to approve. Would you have me applaud to the world what my heart must internally condemn? would you have me tamely sit down and flatter our infamous betrayer, and, to avoid a prison, continually suffer the more galling bonds of mental confinement? No, never. If we are to be taken from this abode, only let us hold to the right, and, wherever we are thrown, we can still retire to a charming apartment, and look round

"our own hearts with intrepidity and with pleasure!"

In this manner we spent that evening. Early the next morning, as the snow had fallen in great abundance in the night, my son was employed in clearing it away, and opening a passage before the door. He had not been thus engaged long, when he came running in, with looks all pale, to tell us that two strangers, whom he knew to be officers of justice, were making towards the house.

Just as he spoke, they came in, and, approaching the bed where I lay, after previously informing me of their employment and business, made me their prisoner, bidding me prepare to go with them to the county gaol, which was eleven miles off.

"My friends," said I, "this is severe weather on which you are come to take me to a prison; and it is particularly unfortunate at this time, as one of my arms has lately been burnt in a terrible manner, and it has thrown me into a slight fever; and I want clothes to cover me, and I am now too weak and old to walk far in such deep snow: but, if it must be so, I'll try to obey you."

I then turned to my wife and children, and directed them to get together what few things were left us, and to prepare immediately for leaving this place. I entreated them to be expeditious, and de-

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fired my son to assist his eldest sister, who, from a consciousness that she was the cause of all our calamities, was fallen, and had lost anguish in insensibility. I encouraged my wife, who, pale and trembling, clasped our affrighted little ones in her arms, that clung to her bosom in silence, dreading to look round at the strangers. In the mean time, my youngest daughter prepared for our departure; and, as she received several hints to use dispatch, in about an hour we were ready to depart.

CHAP. VI.

NO SITUATION, HOWEVER WRETCHED IT SEEMS, BUT HAS SOME SORT OF COMFORT ATTENDING IT.

WE set forward from this peaceful neighbourhood, and walked on slowly. My eldest daughter being enfeebled by a slow fever, which had begun for some days to undermine her constitution, one of the officers, who had a horse, kindly took her behind him; for even these men cannot entirely divest themselves of humanity. My son led one of the little ones by the hand, and my wife the other, while I leaned upon my youngest girl, whose tears fell, not for her own, but my distresses.

We were now got from my late dwelling about two miles, when we saw a crowd running and shouting behind us, consisting of about fifty of my poor-

est parishioners. These, with dreadful imprecations, soon seized upon the two officers of justice, and, swearing they would never see their minister go to gaol while they had a drop of blood to shed in his defence, were going to use them with great severity. The consequence might have been fatal, had I not immediately interposed, and, with some difficulty, rescued the officers from the hands of the enraged multitude. My children, who looked upon my delivery now as certain, appeared transported with joy, and were incapable of containing their raptures. But they were soon undeceived, upon hearing me address the poor deluded people, who came, as they imagined, to do me service.

“What! my friends,” cried I, “and is this the way you love me! Is this the manner you obey the instructions I have given you from the pulpit! Thus to fly in the face of justice, and bring down ruin on yourselves and me! Which is your ringleader? Shew me the man that has thus seduced you: as sure as he lives he shall feel my resentment. Alas! my dear deluded flock, return back to the duty you owe to God, to your country, and to me. I shall yet perhaps one day see you in greater felicity here, and contribute to make your lives more happy. But let it at least be my comfort, when I pen my fold for immortality, that not one here shall be wanting.”

They now seemed all repentance, and, melting

into tears, came one after the other to bid me farewell. I shook each tenderly by the hand, and, leaving them my blessing, proceeded forward without meeting with any farther interruption. Some hours before night we reached the town, or rather village; for it consisted but of a few mean houses, having lost all its former opulence, and retaining no marks of its ancient superiority but the gaol.

Upon entering, we put up at an inn, where we had such refreshments as could most readily be procured, and I supped with my family with my usual cheerfulness. After seeing them properly accommodated for that night, I next attended the sheriff's officers to the prison, which had been built for the purposes of war, and consisted of one large apartment, strongly grated, and paved with stone, common to both felons and debtors at certain hours in the four and twenty. Besides this, every prisoner had a separate cell, where he was locked in for the night.

I expected, upon my entrance, to find nothing but lamentations and various sounds of misery: but it was very different. The prisoners seemed all employed in one common design, that of forgetting thought in merriment or clamour. I was apprized of the usual perquisite required upon these occasions, and immediately complied with the demand, though the little money I had was very near being all exhausted. This was immediately sent away for li-

quor, and the whole prison soon was filled with riot, laughter, and profaneness.

“How!” cried I to myself, “shall men so very wicked be cheerful, and shall I be melancholy! I feel only the same confinement with them, and I think I have more reason to be happy.”

With such reflections I laboured to become cheerful: but cheerfulness was never yet produced by effort, which is itself painful. As I was sitting, therefore, in a corner of the gaol, in a pensive posture, one of my fellow prisoners came up, and, sitting by me, entered into conversation. It was my constant rule in life never to avoid the conversation of any man who seemed to desire it; for, if good, I might profit by his instruction,—if bad, he might be assisted by mine. I found this to be a knowing man, of strong unlettered sense; but a thorough knowledge of the world, as it is called, or, more properly speaking, of human nature on the wrong side. He asked me if I had taken care to provide myself with a bed, which was a circumstance I had never once attended to.

“That’s unfortunate,” cried he, “as you are allowed here nothing but straw, and your apartment is very large and cold. However, you seem to be something of a gentleman, and, as I have been one myself in my time, part of my bed clothes are heartily at your service.”

I thanked him, professing my surprise at finding such humanity in a gaol, in misfortunes ; adding, to let him see that I was a scholar, that "The sage ancient seemed to understand the value of company in affliction, when he said, *Ton kosmon aire, ei dos ton etairon* ; and in fact," continued I, "what is the world if it affords only solitude !"

"You talk of the world, Sir," returned my fellow prisoner ; "the world is in its dotage ; and yet the cosmogony, or creation of the world, has puzzled the philosophers of every age. What a medley of opinions have they not broached upon the creation of the world. Sanconiathon, Manetho, Berofus, and Ocellus Lucanus, have all attempted it in vain. The latter hath these words, *Anarchon ara kai atelutaion topan*, which implies"———"I ask pardon, Sir," cried I, "for interrupting so much learning ; but I think I have heard all this before. Have I not had the pleasure of once seeing you at Welbridge fair, and is not your name Ephraim Jenkinson ?" At this demand he only sighed. "I suppose you must recollect," resumed I, "one Doctor Primrose from whom you bought a horse."

He now at once recollected me ; for the gloominess of the place, and the approaching night, had prevented his distinguishing my features before.—"Yes, Sir," returned Mr Jenkinson, "I remember you perfectly well ; I bought a horse, but forgot

“to pay for him. Your neighbour Flamborough is
 “the only prosecutor I am any way afraid of at next
 “assizes; for he intends to swear positively against
 “me as a coiner. I am heartily sorry, Sir, that ever
 “I deceived you, or indeed any man; for you see,”
 continued he, shewing his shackles, “what my tricks
 “have brought me to.”

“Well, Sir,” replied I, “your kindness in of-
 “fering me assistance, when you could expect no
 “return, shall be repaid with my endeavours to
 “soften, or totally suppress Mr Flamborough’s evi-
 “dence, and I will send my son to him for that pur-
 “pose the first opportunity; nor do I in the least
 “doubt but he will comply with my request; and
 “as to my own evidence, you need be under no un-
 “easiness about that.”

“Well, Sir,” cried he, “all the return I can
 “make shall be yours. You shall have more than
 “half my bed-clothes to-night, and I’ll take care
 “to stand your friend in the prison, where I think
 “I have some influence.”

I thanked him, and could not avoid being sur-
 prised at the present youthful change in his aspect;
 for at the time I had seen him before he appeared at
 least sixty. “Sir,” answered he, “you are little
 “acquainted with the world: I had at that time
 “false hair, and have learnt the art of counterfeit-
 “ing every age from seventeen to seventy. Ah!

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"Sir, had I but bestowed half the pains to learn a trade that I have in learning to be a scoundrel, I might have been a rich man at this day. But, rogue as I am, still I may be your friend, and that perhaps when you least expect it."

We were now prevented from further conversation by the arrival of the gaoler's servants, who came to call over the prisoners names, and lock up for the night. A fellow also, with a bundle of straw for my bed, attended, who led me along a dark narrow passage into a room paved like the common prison, and in one corner of this I spread my bed, and the clothes given me by my fellow-prisoner; which done, my conductor, who was civil enough, bade me a good night. After my usual meditations, and having praised my heavenly Corrector, I laid myself down, and slept with the utmost tranquillity till morning.

C H A P. VII.

A REFORMATION IN THE GAOL. TO MAKE LAWS COMPLETE, THEY SHOULD REWARD AS WELL AS PUNISH.

THE next morning early, I was awaked by my family, whom I found in tears by my bed side. The gloomy strength of every thing about us, it seems, had daunted them. I gently rebuked their

forrow, assuring them I had never slept with greater tranquillity, and next inquired after my eldest daughter, who was not among them. They informed me, that yesterday's uneasiness and fatigue had increased her fever, and it was judged proper to leave her behind. My next care was to send my son to procure a room or two, to lodge the family in, as near the prison as conveniently could be found. He obeyed; but could only find one apartment, which was hired, at a small expence, for his mother and sisters, the gaoler with humanity consenting to let him and his two little brothers lie in the prison with me. A bed was therefore prepared for them in a corner of the room, which I thought answered very conveniently. I was willing, however, previously to know whether my little children chose to lie in a place which seemed to fright them upon entrance.

"Well," cried I, "my good boys, how do you like your bed? I hope you are not afraid to lie in this room, dark as it appears."

"No, Papa," says Dick, "I am not afraid to lie any where, where you are."

"And I," says Bill, who was yet but four years old, "love every place best that my Papa is in."

After this, I allotted to each of the family what they were to do. My daughter was particularly

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directed to watch her declining sister's health ; my wife was to attend me ; my little boys were to read to me : " And as for you, my son," continued I, " it is by the labour of your hands we must all hope to be supported. Your wages, as a day-labourer, will be full sufficient, with proper frugality, to maintain us all, and comfortably too. Thou art now sixteen years old, and hast strength, and it was given thee, my son, for very useful purposes ; for it must save from famine your helpless parents and family. Prepare, then, this evening to look out for work to-morrow, and bring home every night what money you earn for our support."

Having thus instructed him, and settled the rest, I walked down to the common prison, where I could enjoy more air and room. But I was not long there, when the execrations, lewdness, and brutality, that invaded on every side, drove me back to my apartment again. Here I sat for some time, pondering upon the strange infatuation of wretches, who, finding all mankind in open arms against them, were, however, labouring to make themselves a future and tremendous enemy.

Their insensibility excited my highest compassion, and blotted my own uneasiness a while from my mind. It even appeared as a duty incumbent upon me to attempt to reclaim them. I resolved, therefore, once more to return, and, in spite of their con-

tempt, to give them my advice, and conquer them by perseverance. Going, therefore, among them again, I informed Mr Jenkinson of my design, at which he laughed, but communicated it to the rest. The proposal was received with the greatest good humour, as it promised to afford a new fund of entertainment to persons who had now no other resource for mirth but what could be derived from ridicule or debauchery.

I therefore read them a portion of the service with a loud unaffected voice, and found my audience perfectly merry upon the occasion. Lewd whispers, groans of contrition burlesqued, winking and coughing, alternately excited laughter. However, I continued with my natural solemnity to read on, sensible that what I did might amend some, but could itself receive no contamination from any.

After reading, I entered upon my exhortation, which was rather calculated at first to amuse them than to reprove. I previously observed, that no other motive but their welfare could induce me to this; that I was their fellow-prisoner, and now gained nothing by preaching. I was sorry, I said, to hear them so very profane, because they got nothing by it, but might lose a great deal: "For be assured, my friends," cried I, "for you are my friends, however the world may disclaim your friendship, though you swore twelve thousand oaths in a day, it would not put one penny in your

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"purse. Then what signifies calling every moment upon the devil, and courting his friendship, since you find how scurvily he uses you. He has given you nothing here, you find, but a mouthful of oaths and an empty belly; and, by the best accounts I have of him, he will give you nothing that's good hereafter.

"If used ill in our dealings with one man, we naturally go elsewhere. Were it not worth your while, then, just to try how you may like the usage of another master, who gives you fair promises at least, to come to him. Surely, my friends, of all stupidity in the world, his must be greatest, who, after robbing a house, runs to the thief-takers for protection. And yet how are you more wise? you are all seeking comfort from him that has already betrayed you, applying to a more malicious being than any thief-taker of them all: for they only decoy, and then hang you; but he decoys and hangs, and, what is worst of all, will not let you loose after the hangman has done."

When I had concluded, I received the compliments of my audience, some of whom came and shook me by the hand, swearing that I was a very honest fellow, and that they desired my further acquaintance. I therefore promised to repeat my lecture next, and actually conceived some hopes of making a reformation here; for it had been my opinion, that no man was past the hour of amendment,

every heart lying open to the shafts of reproof, if the archer could but take a proper aim. When I had thus satisfied my mind, I went back to my apartment, where my wife had prepared a frugal meal, while Mr Jenkinson begged leave to add his dinner to ours, and partake of the pleasure (as he was kind enough to express it) of my conversation. He had not yet seen my family; for, as they came to my apartment by a door in the narrow passage, already described, by this means they avoided the common prison. Jenkinson, at the first interview, therefore, seemed not a little struck with the beauty of my youngest daughter, which her pensive air contributed to heighten; and my little ones did not pass unnoticed.

“Alas, Doctor,” cried he, “these children are too handsome, and too good, for such a place as this!”

“Why, Mr Jenkinson,” replied I, “thank Heaven, my children are pretty tolerable in morals, and, if they be good, it matters little for the rest.”

“I fancy, Sir,” returned my fellow-prisoner, that “it must give you great comfort to have this little family about you.”

“A comfort! Mr Jenkinson,” replied I: “yes, it is indeed a comfort, and I would not be without them for all the world; for they can make a dun-

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“geon seem a palace. There is but one way in this
“life of wounding my happiness, and that is by in-
“juring them.”

“I am afraid then, Sir,” cried he, “that I am in
“some measure culpable; for I think I see here
“(looking at my son Moses) one that I have in-
“jured, and by whom I wish to be forgiven.”

My son immediately recollected his voice and fea-
tures, though he had before seen him in disguise,
and, taking him by the hand, with a smile forgave
him. “Yet,” continued he, “I can’t help wonder-
“ing at what you could see in my face, to think me
“a proper mark for deception.”

“My dear Sir,” returned the other, “it was not
“your face, but your white stockings, and the black
“ribbon in your hair, that allured me. But, no
“disparagement to your parts, I have deceived
“wiser men than you in my time; and yet, with all
“my tricks, the blockheads have been too many for
“me at last.”

“I suppose,” cried my son, “that the narrative of
“such a life as yours must be extremely instructive
“and amusing.”

“Not much of either,” returned Mr Jenkinson.
“Those relations which describe the tricks and
“vices only of mankind, by increasing our suspicion

"in life, retard our success. The traveller that distrusts every person he meets, and turns back upon the appearance of every man that looks like a robber, seldom arrives in time to his journey's end.

"Indeed, I think from my own experience I may say, that the knowing one is the silliest fellow under the sun. I was thought cunning from my very childhood. When but seven years old, the ladies would say that I was a perfect little man; at fourteen, I knew the world, cocked my hat, and loved the ladies; at twenty, though I was perfectly honest, yet every one thought me so cunning, that not one would trust me. Thus I was obliged to turn sharper in my own defence, and have lived ever since, my head throbbing with schemes to deceive, and my heart palpitating with fears of detection.

"I used often to laugh at your honest simple neighbour Flamborough, and, one way or another, generally cheated him once a-year. Yet still the honest man went forward without suspicion, and grew rich, while I still continued tricky and cunning, and was poor, without the consolation of being honest.

"However," continued he, "let me know your case, and what has brought you here; perhaps,

"though I have not skill to avoid a gaol myself, I
"may extricate my friends."

In compliance with his curiosity, I informed him of the whole train of accidents and follies that had plunged me into my present troubles, and my utter inability to get free.

After hearing my story, and pausing some minutes, he slapped his forehead, as if he had hit upon something material, and took his leave, saying, he would try what could be done.

CHAP. VIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE next morning I communicated to my wife and children the scheme I had planned of reforming the prisoners, which they received with universal disapprobation, alledging the impossibility and impropriety of it; adding, that my endeavours would no way contribute to their amendment, but might probably disgrace my calling.

"Excuse me," returned I; "these people, however fallen, are still men, and that is a very good title to my affections. Good counsel rejected returns to enrich the giver's bosom; and, though the instruction I communicate may not mend

“ them, yet it will assuredly mend myself. If these
“ wretches, my children, were princes, there would
“ be thousands ready to offer their ministry; but, in
“ my opinion, the heart that is buried in a dungeon
“ is as precious as that seated upon a throne. Yes,
“ my treasures, if I can mend them I will; per-
“ haps they will not all despise me. Perhaps I
“ may catch up even one from the gulph, and that
“ will be great gain; for is there upon earth a gem
“ so precious as the human soul?”

Thus saying, I left them, and descended to the common prison, where I found the prisoners very merry, expecting my arrival, and each prepared with some gaol trick to play upon the doctor. Thus, as I was going to begin, one turned my wig awry, as if by accident, and then asked my pardon. A second, who stood at some distance, had a knack of spitting through his teeth, which fell in showers upon my book. A third would cry *Amen* in such an affected tone as gave the rest great delight. A fourth slyly picked my pocket of my spectacles. But there was one whose trick gave more universal pleasure than all the rest; for, observing the manner in which I had disposed my books on the table before me, he very dextrously displaced one of them, and put an obscene jest-book of his own in the place. However, I took no notice of all that this mischievous groupe of little beings could do, but went on, perfectly sensible, that what was ridiculous in my attempt would excite mirth only the first or se-

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cond time, while what was serious would be permanent. My design succeeded ; and, in less than six days, some were penitent, and all attentive.

It was now that I applauded my perseverance and address, at thus giving sensibility to wretches divested of every moral feeling ; and now began to think of doing them temporal services also, by rendering their situation somewhat more comfortable. Their time had hitherto been divided between famine and excess, tumultuous riot and bitter repining. Their only employment was quarelling among each other, playing cribbage, and cutting tobacco stoppers. From this last mode of idle industry, I took the hint of setting such as chose to work at cutting pegs for tobacconists and shoemakers, the proper wood being bought by a general subscription, and, when manufactured, sold by my appointment ; so that each earned something every day,—a trifle indeed, but sufficient to maintain him.

I did not stop here, but instituted fines for the punishment of immorality, and rewards for peculiar industry. Thus, in less than a fortnight, I had formed them into something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience.

And it were highly to be wished, that legislative power would thus direct the law rather to reforma-

tion than severity;—that it would appear convinced, that the work of eradicating crimes is not by making punishments familiar, but formidable. Instead of our present prisons, which find or make men guilty, which inclose wretches for the commission of one crime, and return them, if returned alive, fitted for the perpetration of thousands, it were to be wished we had, as in other parts of Europe, places of penitence and solitude, where the accused might be attended by such as could give them repentance, if guilty, or new motives of virtue, if innocent. And this, but not the increasing punishments, is the way to mend a state: Nor can I avoid even questioning the validity of that right which social combinations have assumed, of capitally punishing offences of a slight nature. In cases of murder, their right is obvious, as it is the duty of us all, from the law of self-defence, to cut off that man who has shown a disregard for the life of another. Against such all nature rises in arms. But it is not so against him who steals my property. Natural law gives me no right to take away his life, as by that the horse he steals is as much his property as mine. If, then, I have any right, it must be from a compact made between us, that he who deprives the other of his horse shall die. But this is a false compact; because no man has a right to barter his life, no more than to take it away, as it is not his own. And next the compact is inadequate, and would be set aside, even in a court of modern equity, as there is a great penalty for a very trifling convenience, since it is far

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better that two men should live than that one man should ride. But a compact that is false between two men is equally so between a hundred, or a hundred thousand : for as ten millions of circles can never make a square, so the united voice of myriads cannot lend the smallest foundation to falsehood. It is thus that Reason speaks, and untutored Nature says the same thing. Savages, that are directed nearly by natural law alone, are very tender of the lives of each other ; they seldom shed blood but to retaliate former cruelty.

Our Saxon ancestors, fierce as they were in war, had but few executions in times of peace ; and in all commencing governments, that have the print of nature still strong upon them, scarce any crime is held capital.

It is among the citizens of a refined community, that penal laws, which are in the hands of the rich, are laid upon the poor. Government, while it grows older, seems to acquire the moroseness of age ; and, as if our possessions were become dearer in proportion as they increased, as if the more enormous our wealth, the more extensive our fears, our possessions are paled with new edicts every day, and hung round with gibbets to scare every invader.

Whether is it from the number of our penal laws, or the licentiousness of our people, that this country should show more convicts in a year than

half the dominions of Europe united? Perhaps it is owing to both; for they mutually produce each other. When, by indiscriminate penal laws, a nation beholds the same punishment affixed to dissimilar degrees of guilt, from perceiving no distinction in the penalty, the people are led to lose all sense of distinction in the crime, and this distinction is the bulwark of all morality. Thus the multitude of laws produce new vices, and new vices call for fresh restraints.

It were to be wished, then, that power, instead of contriving new laws to punish vice, instead of drawing hard the cords of society, till a convulsion come to burst them, instead of cutting away wretches as useless, before we have tried their utility, instead of converting correction into vengeance, it were to be wished that we tried the restrictive arts of government, and made law the protector, but not the tyrant of the people. We should then find that creatures, whose souls are held as dross, only wanted the hand of a refiner: we should then find that wretches, now stuck up for long tortures, lest luxury should feel a momentary pang, might, if properly treated, serve to sinew the state in times of danger; that, as their faces are like ours, their hearts are so too; that few minds are so base as that perseverance cannot amend; that a man may see his last crime without dying for it; and that very little blood will serve to cement our security.

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C H A P. IX.

HAPPINESS AND MISERY RATHER THE RESULT OF PRUDENCE THAN OF VIRTUE IN THIS LIFE. TEMPORAL EVILS OR FELICITIES ARE REGARDED BY HEAVEN AS THINGS MERELY IN THEMSELVES TRIFLING, AND UNWORTHY ITS CARE IN THE DISTRIBUTION.

I HAD now been confined more than a fortnight, but had not since been visited by my dear Olivia, and I greatly longed to see her. Having communicated my wishes to my wife, the next morning the poor girl entered my apartment, leaning on her sister's arm. The change which I saw in her countenance struck me. The numberless graces that once resided there were now fled, and the hand of death seemed to have moulded every feature to alarm me. Her temples were sunk, her forehead was tense, and a fatal paleness sat upon her cheek.

"I am glad to see thee, my dear," cried I: "but why this dejection, Livy? I hope, my love, you have too great a regard for me, to permit disappointment thus to undermine a life which I prize as my own. Be cheerful, child, and we may yet see happier days."

"You have ever, Sir," replied she, "been kind to me, and it adds to my pain, that I shall never have an opportunity of sharing that happiness you."

“promise. Happiness, I fear, is no longer reserved
“for me here; and I long to be rid of a place where
“I have only found distress. Indeed, Sir, I wish
“you would make a proper submission to Mr
“Thornhill; it may in some measure induce him to
“pity you, and it will give me relief in dying.”

“Never, child,” replied I, “I never shall be
“brought to acknowledge my daughter a prostitute;
“for, though the world may look upon your
“offence with scorn, let it be mine to regard it as a
“mark of credulity, not of guilt. My dear, I am
“no way miserable in this place, however dismal it
“may seem; and be assured, that while you continue
“to bless me by living, he shall never have my
“consent to make you more wretched by marrying
“another.”

After the departure of my daughter, my fellow-prisoner, who was by at this interview, sensibly enough expostulated upon my obstinacy, in refusing a submission which promised me freedom. He observed, that the rest of my family was not to be sacrificed to the peace of one child alone, and she the only one who had offended me. “Besides,” added he, “I don’t know if it be just thus to obstruct the
“union of man and wife, which you do at present,
“by refusing to consent to a match which you cannot hinder, but may render unhappy.”

“Sir,” replied I, “you are unacquainted with the

"man that oppresses us. I am very sensible that
"no submission I can make could procure me li-
"berty even for an hour. I am told, that even in
"this very room a debtor of his, no later than last
"year, died for want. But though my submission
"and approbation could transfer me from hence to
"the most beautiful apartment he is possessed of,
"yet I would grant neither, as something whispers
"me that it would be giving a sanction to adultery.
"While my daughter lives, no other marriage of
"his shall ever be legal in my eye. Were she re-
"moved, indeed, I should be the basest of men, from
"any resentment of my own, to attempt putting
"asunder those who wish for an union. No, villain
"as he is, I could then wish him married, to pre-
"vent the consequences of his future debaucheries.
"But should I not now be the most cruel of all fa-
"thers, to sign an instrument which must send my
"child to the grave, merely to avoid a prison my-
"self; and thus, to escape one pang, break my child's
"heart with a thousand !"

He acquiesced in the justice of this answer ; but
could not avoid observing, that he feared my daugh-
ter's life was already too much wasted to keep me
long a prisoner. "However," continued he,
"though you refuse to the nephew, I hope you
"have no objections to laying your case before the
"uncle, who has the first character in the kingdom
"for every thing that is just and good. I would
"advise you to send him a letter by the post, inti-

"mating all his nephew's ill usage, and my life for
 "it, that in three days you shall have an answer."
 I thanked him for the hint, and instantly set about
 complying; but wanted paper, and unluckily all
 our money had been laid out that morning in provi-
 sions: however he supplied me.

For the three ensuing days I was in a state of
 anxiety, to know what reception my letter might
 meet with; but, in the mean time, was frequently
 solicited by my wife to submit to any conditions ra-
 ther than remain here, and every hour received re-
 peated accounts of the decline of my daughter's
 health. The third day and the fourth arrived, but
 I received no answer to my letter: the complaints
 of a stranger against a favourite nephew were not
 likely to succeed; so that these hopes soon vanished
 like all my former. My mind, however, still sup-
 ported itself, though confinement and bad air began
 to make a visible alteration in my health, and my
 arm that had suffered in the fire grew worse. But
 my children still sat by me, and, while I was stretch-
 ed on my straw, read to me by turns, or listened and
 wept at my instructions. But my daughter's health
 declined faster than mine; every message from her
 contributed to increase my apprehensions and pain.
 The fifth morning after I had written the letter
 which was sent to Sir William Thornhill, I was
 alarmed with an account that she was speechless.
 Now it was that confinement was truly painful to
 me; my soul was bursting from its prison to be

near the pillow of my child, to comfort, to strengthen her, to receive her last wishes, and teach her soul the way to heaven. Another account came; she was expiring; and yet I was debarred the small comfort of weeping by her. My fellow-prisoner, some time after, came with the last account. He bade me be patient. She was dead! dead! The next morning he returned, and found me with my two little ones, now my only companions, who were using all their innocent efforts to comfort me. They entreated to read to me, and bid me not to cry, for I was now too old to weep. "And is not my sister an angel now, Papa?" cried the eldest; "and why then are you sorry for her? I wish I were an angel, out of this frightful place, if my Papa were with me." "Yes," added my youngest darling, "Heaven, where my sister is, is a finer place than this; there are none but good people there, and the people here are very bad."

Mr Jenkinson interrupted their harmless prattle, by observing, that, now my daughter was no more, I should seriously think of the rest of my family, and attempt to save my own life, which was every day declining, for want of necessaries and wholesome air. He added, that it was now incumbent on me to sacrifice any pride or resentment of my own to the welfare of those who depended on me for support; and that I was now both by reason and justice obliged to try to reconcile my landlord.

“Heaven be praised,” replied I, “there is no pride left me now: I should detest my own heart if I saw either pride or resentment lurking there. On the contrary, as my oppressor has been once my parishioner, I hope one day to present him an unpolluted soul at the eternal tribunal. No, Sir, I have no resentment now, though he has taken from me what I held dearer than all his treasures; though he has wrung my heart, for I am sick almost to fainting, very sick, my fellow-prisoner, yet that shall never inspire me with vengeance. I am now willing to approve his marriage; and, if his submission can do him any pleasure, let him know, that, if I have done him any injury, I am sorry for it.” Mr Jenkinson took pen and ink, and wrote down my submission nearly as I have expressed it, to which I signed my name. My son was employed to carry the letter to Mr Thornhill, who was then at his seat in the country. He went, and in about six hours returned with a verbal answer. He had some difficulty, he said, to get a sight of his landlord, as the servants were insolent and suspicious; but he accidentally saw him as he was going out upon business, preparing for his marriage, which was to be in three days. He continued to inform us, that he stepped up in the humblest manner, and delivered the letter, which, when Mr Thornhill had read, he said, that all submission was now too late and unnecessary; that he had heard of our application to his uncle, which met with the contempt it deserved; and, as for the rest, that all

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future applications should be directed to his attorney, and not to him. He observed, however, that, as he had a very good opinion of the discretion of the two young ladies, they might have been the most agreeable intercessors.

"Well, Sir," said I to my fellow-prisoner, "you now discover the temper of the man that oppresses me. He can at once be facetious and cruel; but, let him use me as he will, I shall soon be free, in spite of all his bolts to restrain me. I am now drawing towards an abode that looks brighter as I approach it: this expectation cheers my afflictions; and, though I shall leave a helpless family of orphans behind me, yet they will not be utterly forsaken; some friend, perhaps, will be found to assist them for the sake of their poor father, and some may charitably relieve them for the sake of their heavenly Father."

Just as I spoke, my wife, whom I had not seen that day, appeared with looks of terror, and making efforts, but unable to speak. "Why, my love," cried I, "why will you thus increase my affliction by your own; what though no submissions can turn our severe master, though he has doomed me to die in this place of wretchedness, and though we have lost a darling child, yet still you will find comfort in your other children when I shall be no more." "We have indeed lost," returned she, "a darling child. My Sophia, my dear-

"est, is gone, snatched from us, carried off by ruffians!"

"How, Madam," cried my fellow-prisoner, "Miss Sophia carried off by villains! sure it cannot be?"

She could only answer with a fixed look and a flood of tears. But one of the prisoners wives, who was present, and came in with her, gave us a more distinct account. She informed us, that, as my wife, my daughter, and herself, were taking a walk together on the great road, a little way out of the village, a post-chaise and four drove up to them, and instantly stopped. Upon which a well dressed man, but not Mr Thornhill, stepping out, clasped my daughter round the waist, and, forcing her in, bid the postilion drive on, so that they were out of sight in a moment.

"Now," cried I, "the sum of my miseries is made up, nor is it in the power of any thing on earth to give me another pang. What! not one left! not to leave me one! the monster! the child that was next my heart! she had the beauty of an angel, and almost the wisdom of an angel. But support that woman, nor let her fall. Not to leave me one!"—"Alas! my husband," said my wife, "you seem to want comfort even more than I. Our distresses are great; but I could bear all this, and more, if I saw you but easy. They may take

"away my children, and all the world, if they leave me but you."

My son, who was present, endeavoured to moderate our grief: he bade us take comfort, for he hoped we might still have reason to be thankful.—

"My child," cried I, "look round the world, and see if there be any happiness left me now. Is not every ray of comfort shut out, while all our bright prospects only lie beyond the grave!" "My dear father," returned he, "I hope there is still something that will give you an interval of satisfaction; for I have a letter from my brother George."

"What of him, child," interrupted I; "does he know of our misery. I hope my boy is exempt from any part of what his wretched family suffers." "Yes, Sir," returned he, "he is perfectly gay, cheerful, and happy. His letter brings nothing but good news: he is the favourite of his colonel, who promises to procure him the very next lieutenantancy that becomes vacant."

"And are you sure of all this?" cried my wife; "are you sure that nothing has befallen my boy?" "Nothing indeed, Madam," returned my son: "you shall see the letter, which will give you the highest pleasure; and, if any thing can procure you comfort, I am sure that will." "But are you sure," still repeated she, "that the letter is from himself, and that he is really so happy?" "Yes, Madam," replied he, "it is certainly his, and that

“will one day be the credit and support of our family!” “Then I thank Providence,” cried she, “that my last letter to him has miscarried. Yes, my dear,” continued she, turning to me, “I will now confess, that, though the hand of Heaven is fore upon us in other instances, it has been favourable here. By the last letter I wrote my son, which was in the bitterness of anger, I defamed him, upon his mother’s blessing, and if he had the heart of a man, to see justice done his father and sister, and avenge our cause. But, thanks be to him that directs all things, it has miscarried, and I am at rest.” “Woman,” cried I, “thou hast done very ill, and at another time my reproaches might have been more severe. Oh! what a tremendous gulph hast thou escaped, that would have buried both thee and him in endless ruin! Providence, indeed, has here been kinder to us than we to ourselves. It has reserved that son to be the father and protector of my children when I shall be away. How unjustly did I complain of being stripped of every comfort, when I still hear that he is happy, and insensible of our afflictions, still kept in reserve to support his widowed mother, to protect his brothers and sisters! But what sisters has he left? he has no sisters now; they are all gone, robbed from me, and I am undone.”—“Father,” interrupted my son, “I beg you will give me leave to read this letter; I know it will please you.” Upon which, with my permission, he read as follows.

"HONOURED SIR,

"I have called off my imagination a few moments from the pleasures that surround me, to fix them upon objects that are still more pleasing, the dear little fire side at home. My fancy draws that harmless groupe as listening to every line of this with great composure. I view those faces with delight which never felt the deforming hand of ambition or distress! But, whatever your happiness may be at home, I am sure it will be some addition to it, to hear that I am perfectly pleased with my situation, and every way happy here.

"Our regiment is countermanded, and is not to leave this kingdom. The colonel, who professes himself my friend, takes me with him to all companies where he is acquainted; and, after my first visit, I generally find myself received with increased respect upon repeating it. I danced last night with Lady G——; and, could I forget you know whom, I might be perhaps successful. But it is my fate still to remember others, while I am myself forgotten by most of my absent friends; and in this number, I fear, Sir, that I must consider you; for I have long expected the pleasure of a letter from home to no purpose. Olivia and Sophia, too, promised to write, but seem to have forgotten me. Tell them that they are two arrant little baggages, and that I am this moment in a most violent passion with them; yet still, I know not how, though I want to bluster a little,

“ my heart is respondent only to softer emotions.
 “ Then tell them, Sir, after all, I love them affectionately ; and be assured of my ever remaining
 “ Your dutiful Son.”

“ In all our miseries,” cried I, “ what thanks have we not to return, that one, at least, of our family is exempted from what we suffer. Heaven be his guard, and keep my boy thus happy, to be the supporter of his widowed mother, and the father of these two babes, which are all the patrimony I can now bequeath him. May he keep their innocence from the temptations of want, and be their conductor in the paths of honour.” I had scarce said these words, when a noise, like that of a tumult, seemed to proceed from the prison below ; it died away soon after, and a clanking of fetters was heard along the passage that led to my apartment. The keeper of the prison entered, holding a man all bloody, wounded, and fettered with the heaviest irons. I looked with compassion on the wretch as he approached me, but with horror, when I found it was my own son. “ My George ! my George ! and do I behold thee thus. Wounded ! fettered ! Is this thy happiness ! Is this the manner you return to me ! O that this sight could break my heart at once, and let me die !”

“ Where, Sir, is your fortitude,” returned my son, with an intrepid voice. “ I must suffer ; my life is forfeited, and let them take it ; it is my last

"happiness that I have committed no murder,
"though I have lost all hopes of pardon."

I tried to restrain my passions for a few minutes in silence; but I thought I should have died with the effort.—"O my boy, my heart weeps to behold thee thus, and I cannot, cannot help it. In the moment that I thought thee blessed, and prayed for thy safety, to behold thee thus again! Chained, wounded! And yet the death of the youthful is happy. But I am old, a very old man, and have lived to see this day:—to see my children all untimely falling about me, while I continue a wretched survivor in the midst of ruin! May all the curses that ever sunk a soul fall heavy upon the murderer of my children. May he live, like me, to see"——

"Hold, Sir," replied my son, "or I shall blush for thee. How, Sir, forgetful of your age, your holy calling, thus to arrogate the justice of Heaven, and fling those curses upward, that must soon descend to crush thy own gray head with destruction! No, Sir, let it be your care now to fit me for that vile death I must shortly suffer, to arm me with hope and resolution, to give me courage to drink of that bitterness which must shortly be my portion."

"My child, you must not die; I am sure no offence of thine can deserve so vile a punishment:

"My George could never be guilty of any crime
"to make his ancestors ashamed of him."

"Mine, Sir," returned my son, "is, I fear, an
"unpardonable one. I have sent a challenge, and
"that is death by a late act of parliament. When
"I received my mother's letter from home, I im-
"mediately came down, determined to punish the
"betrayal of our honour, and sent him an order to
"meet me, which he answered not in person, but
"by his dispatching four of his domestics to seize
"me. I wounded one, but the rest made me their
"prisoner. The coward is determined to put the
"law in execution against me: the proofs are un-
"deniable; and, as I am the first transgressor upon
"the statute, I see no hopes of pardon. But you
"have often charmed me with the lessons of forti-
"tude; let me now, Sir, find them in your ex-
"ample."

"And my son, you shall find them. I am now
"raised above this world, and all the pleasures it
"can produce. From this moment I break from
"my heart all the ties that held it down to earth,
"and will prepare to fit us both for eternity. Yes,
"my son, I will point out the way, and my soul
"shall guide yours in the ascent, for we will take
"our flight together. I now see, and am convinced,
"you can expect no pardon here, and can only
"exhort you to seek it at the greatest tribunal,
"where we both shall shortly answer. But let us

"not be niggardly in our exhortations, but let all our fellow-prisoners have a share; good gaoler, let them be permitted to stand here, while I attempt to improve them." Thus saying, I made an effort to rise from my straw, but wanted strength, and was able only to recline against the wall. The prisoners assembled, according to my directions, for they loved to hear my counsel; my son and his mother supported me on either side: I looked and saw that none were wanting, and then addressed them with the following exhortation.

CHAP. X.

THE EQUAL DEALINGS OF PROVIDENCE DEMONSTRATED, WITH REGARD TO THE HAPPY AND THE MISERABLE HERE BELOW. THAT, FROM THE NATURE OF PLEASURE AND PAIN, THE WRETCHED MUST BE REPAID THE BALANCE OF THEIR SUFFERINGS IN THE LIFE HEREAFTER.

"MY friends, my children, and fellow-sufferers, when I reflect on the distribution of good and evil here below, I find that much has been given man to enjoy, yet still more to suffer.— Though we should examine the whole world, we shall not find one man so happy as to have nothing left to wish for; but we daily see thousands, who, by suicide, show us they have nothing left to hope. In this life, then, it appears, that we cannot be

“entirely blessed, but yet we may be completely
“miserable !

“Why man should thus feel pain, why our
“wretchedness should be requisite in the formation
“of universal felicity, why, when all other systems
“are made perfect only by the perfection of their
“subordinate parts, the great system should require
“for its perfection parts that are not only subordi-
“nate to others, but imperfect in themselves !—these
“are questions that never can be explained, and
“might be useless if known. On this subject Pro-
“vidence has thought fit to elude our curiosity, sa-
“tisfied with granting us motives to consolation.

“In this situation, man has called in the friendly
“assistance of philosophy, and Heaven, seeing the in-
“capacity of that to console him, has given him the
“aid of religion. The consolations of philosophy
“are very amusing, but often fallacious. It tells us
“that life is filled with comforts, if we will but en-
“joy them ; and, on the other hand, that, though
“we unavoidably have miseries here, life is short,
“and they will soon be over. Thus do these con-
“solations destroy each other ; for, if life is a place
“of comfort, its shortness must be misery, and, if
“it be long, our griefs are protracted. Thus philo-
“sophy is weak ; but religion comforts in a higher
“strain. Man is here, it tells us, fitting up his
“mind, and preparing it for another abode. When
“the good man leaves the body, and is all a glorious

“mind, he will find he has been making himself a
“heaven of happiness here, while the wretch that
“has been maimed and contaminated by his vices,
“shrinks from his body with terror, and finds that
“he has anticipated the vengeance of Heaven. To
“religion, then, we must hold in every circum-
“stance of life for our truest comfort; for, if alrea-
“dy we are happy, it is a pleasure to think that we
“can make that happiness unending, and, if we are
“miserable, it is very consoling to think that there
“is a place of rest. Thus, to the fortunate, reli-
“gion holds out a continuance of bliss; to the
“wretched a change from pain.

“But, though religion is very kind to all men, it
“has promised peculiar reward to the unhappy; the
“sick, the naked, the houseless, the heavy-laden, and
“the prisoner, have ever most frequent promises in
“our sacred law. The author of our religion eve-
“ry where professes himself the wretch’s friend, and,
“unlike the false ones of this world, bestows all
“his caresses upon the forlorn. The unthinking
“have censured this as partiality, as a preference
“without merit to deserve it. But they never re-
“flect, that it is not in the power even of Heaven
“itself to make the offer of unceasing felicity as great
“a gift to the happy as to the miserable. To the
“first, eternity is but a single blessing, since at most
“it but increases what they already possess. To
“the latter it is a double advantage; for it dimi-

“diminishes their pain here, and rewards them with
“heavenly bliss hereafter.

“But Providence is in another respect kinder to
“the poor than the rich; for as it thus makes the
“life after death more desirable, so it smooths the
“passage there. The wretched have long familiarity
“with every face of terror. The man of sorrows
“lays himself quietly down: he has no possessions
“to regret, and but few ties to stop his departure:
“he feels only nature’s pang in the final separation,
“and this is no way greater than he has often
“fainted under before; for, after a certain degree
“of pain, every new breach that death opens in
“the constitution, nature kindly covers with insen-
“sibility.

“Thus Providence has given the wretched two
“advantages over the happy in this life, greater fe-
“licity in dying, and in heaven all the superiority
“of pleasure which arises from contrasted enjoy-
“ment. And this superiority, my friends, is no
“small advantage, and seems to be one of the plea-
“sures of the poor man in the parable; for, though
“he was already in heaven, and felt all the rap-
“tures it could give, yet it was mentioned as an
“addition to his happiness, that he had once been
“wretched, and now was comforted; that he had
“known what it was to be miserable, and now felt
“what it was to be happy.

“ Thus, my friends, you see religion does what
“ philosophy could never do: it shews the equal
“ dealings of Heaven to the happy and the unhappy,
“ and levels all human enjoyments to nearly the
“ same standard. It gives to both rich and poor
“ the same happiness hereafter, and equal hopes to
“ aspire after it; but if the rich have the advantage
“ of enjoying pleasure here, the poor have the end-
“ less satisfaction of knowing what it was once to
“ be miserable, when crowned with endless felicity
“ hereafter; and even though this should be called
“ a small advantage, yet, being an eternal one, it
“ must make up by duration what the temporal
“ happiness of the great may have exceeded by in-
“ tenseness.

“ These are therefore the consolations which the
“ wretched have peculiar to themselves, and in
“ which they are above the rest of mankind; in
“ other respects they are below them. They who
“ would know the miseries of the poor must see life
“ and endure it. To declaim on the temporal ad-
“ vantages they enjoy, is only repeating what none
“ either believe or practise. The men who have the
“ necessaries of living are not poor, and they who
“ want them must be miserable. Yes, my friends,
“ we must be miserable. No vain efforts of a re-
“ fined imagination can sooth the wants of nature,
“ can give elastic sweetness to the dank vapour of
“ a dungeon, or ease to the throbbings of a woe-
“ worn heart. Let the philosopher, from his couch.

“ of softness, tell us that we can resist all these.
“ Alas ! the effort by which we resist them is still
“ the greatest pain ! Death is flight, and any man
“ may sustain it ; but torments are dreadful, and
“ these no man can endure.

“ To us, then, my friends, the promises of happiness in heaven should be peculiarly dear ; for if
“ our reward be in this life alone, we are then indeed of all men the most miserable. When I look
“ round these gloomy walls, made to terrify, as well
“ as to confine us,—this light, that only serves to
“ show the horrors of the place,—those shackles,
“ that tyranny has imposed, or crimes made necessary,—when I survey these emaciated looks,
“ and hear those groans, O my friends, what a glorious exchange would heaven be for these. To
“ fly through regions unconfined as air, to bask in
“ the sunshine of eternal bliss, to carol over endless
“ hymns of praise, to have no master to threaten or
“ insult us, but the form of Goodness himself forever in our eyes ; when I think of these things,
“ Death becomes the messenger of very glad tidings ;
“ when I think of these things, his sharpest arrow
“ becomes the staff of my support ; when I think
“ of these things, what is there in life worth having ? when I think of these things, what is
“ there that should not be spurned away ? Kings
“ in their palaces should groan for such advantages ;
“ but we, humbled as we are, should yearn for
“ them.

“And shall these things be ours? Ours they
“will certainly be, if we but try for them; and,
“what is a comfort, we are shut up from many
“temptations that would retard our pursuit. Only
“let us try for them, and they will certainly be
“ours, and, what is still a comfort, shortly too; for
“if we look back on past life, it appears but a very
“short span, and, whatever we may think of the
“rest of life, it will yet be found of less duration;
“as we grow older, the days seem to grow shorter,
“and our intimacy with time ever lessens the per-
“ception of his stay. Then let us take comfort
“now; for we shall soon be at our journey’s end;
“we shall soon lay down the heavy burden laid by
“Heaven upon us; and though Death, the only
“friend of the wretched, for a little while mocks
“the weary traveller with the view, and, like his
“horizon, still flies before him, yet the time will
“certainly and shortly come, when we shall cease
“from our toil; when the luxurious great ones of
“the world shall no more tread us to the earth;
“when we shall think with pleasure on our suffer-
“ings below; when we shall be surrounded with all
“our friends, or such as deserved our friendship;
“when our bliss shall be unutterable, and still, to
“crown all, unending.”

C H A P. XI.

HAPPIER PROSPECTS BEGIN TO APPEAR. LET US BE INFLEXIBLE, AND FORTUNE WILL AT LAST CHANGE IN OUR FAVOUR.

WHEN I had thus finished, and my audience was retired, the gaoler, who was one of the most humane of his profession, hoped I would not be displeased, as what he did was but his duty, observing, that he must be obliged to remove my son into a stronger cell, but that he should be permitted to revisit me every morning. I thanked him for his clemency; and grasping my boy's hand, bade him farewell, and be mindful of the great duty that was before him.

I again, therefore, laid me down, and one of my little ones sat by my bed side reading, when Mr Jenkinson entering, informed me that there was news of my daughter; for that she was seen by a person, about two hours before, in a strange gentleman's company, and that they had stopped at a neighbouring village for refreshment, and seemed as if returning to town. He had scarce delivered this news, when the gaoler came, with looks of haste and pleasure, to inform me, that my daughter was found. Moses came running in a moment after, crying out that his sister Sophy was below, and coming up with our old friend Mr Burchell.

Just as he delivered this news, my dearest girl entered, and, with looks almost wild with pleasure, ran to kiss me in a transport of affection. Her mother's tears and silence also showed her pleasure.—“Here, Papa,” cried the charming girl, “here is the brave man to whom I owe my delivery: to this gentleman's intrepidity I am indebted for my happiness and safety”——A kiss from Mr Burchell, whose pleasure seemed even greater than her's, interrupted what she was going to add.

“Ah! Mr Burchell,” cried I, “this is but a wretched habitation you now find us in; and we are now very different from what you last saw us. You were ever our friend: we have long discovered our errors with regard to you, and repented of our ingratitude. After the vile usage you then received at my hands, I am almost ashamed to behold your face: yet I hope you'll forgive me, as I was deceived by a base ungenerous wretch, who, under the mask of friendship, has undone me.”

“It is impossible,” replied Mr Burchell, “that I should forgive you, as you never deserved my resentment. I partly saw your delusion then, and, as it was out of my power to restrain, I could only pity it!”

“It was ever my conjecture,” cried I, “that your mind was noble; but now I find it so. But tell

“me, my dear child, how thou hast been relieved,
“or who the ruffians were who carried thee away?”

“Indeed, Sir,” replied she, “as to the villain
“who brought me off, I am yet ignorant. For as
“my mamma and I were walking out, he came be-
“hind us, and, almost before I could call for help,
“forced me into the post-chaise, and in an instant
“the horses drove away. I met several on the
“road, to whom I cried out for assistance; but
“they disregarded my entreaties. In the mean
“time, the ruffian himself used every art to hinder
“me from crying out: he flattered and threatened
“by turns, and swore, that, if I continued but si-
“lent, he intended no harm. In the mean time, I
“had broken the canvas that he had drawn up, and
“whom should I perceive at some distance but your
“old friend Mr Burchell, walking along with his
“usual swiftness, with the great stick for which
“we used so much to ridicule him. As soon as we
“came within hearing, I called out to him by
“name, and entreated his help. I repeated my ex-
“clamations several times; upon which, with a very
“loud voice, he bid the postillion stop; but the boy
“took no notice, but drove on with still greater
“speed. I now thought he could never overtake
“us, when, in less than a minute, I saw Mr Bur-
“chell come running up by the side of the horses,
“and with one blow knock the postillion to the
“ground. The horses, when he was fallen, soon
“stopped of themselves; and the ruffian stepping

“out, with oaths and menaces, drew his sword, and
“ordered him at his peril to retire; but Mr Burchell running up, shivered his sword to pieces,
“and then pursued him for near a quarter of a
“mile; but he made his escape. I was at this
“time come out myself, willing to assist my deliverer; but he soon returned to me in triumph.
“The postillion, who was recovered, was going to
“make his escape too; but Mr Burchell ordered
“him at his peril to mount again, and drive back
“to town. Finding it impossible to resist, he reluctantly complied, though the wound he had received seemed to me at least to be dangerous. He
“continued to complain of the pain as we drove
“along, so that he at last excited Mr Burchell’s
“compassion, who, at my request, exchanged him
“for another, at an inn where we called on our return.”

“Welcome then,” cried I, “my child, and thou
“her gallant deliverer, a thousand welcomes.—
“Though our cheer is but wretched, yet our hearts
“are ready to receive you. And now, Mr Burchell, as you have delivered my girl, if you think
“her a recompence, she is yours: if you can stoop
“to an alliance with a family so poor as mine, take
“her, obtain her consent, as I know you have her
“heart, and you have mine. And let me tell you,
“Sir, that I give you no small treasure; she has
“been celebrated for beauty, it is true, but that is

"not my meaning, I give you up a treasure in her mind."

"But I suppose, Sir," cried Mr Burchell, "that you are apprized of my circumstances, and of my incapacity to support her as she deserves."

"If your present objection," replied I, "be meant as an evasion of my offer, I desist: but I know no man so worthy to deserve her as you; and if I could give her thousands, and thousands fought her from me, yet my honest brave Burchell should be my dearest choice."

To all this his silence alone seemed to give a mortifying refusal, and, without the least reply to my offer, demanded if we could not be furnished with refreshments from the next inn? Being answered in the affirmative, he ordered them to send in the best dinner that could be provided upon such short notice. He bespoke also a dozen of their best wine, and some cordials for me, adding, with a smile, that he would stretch a little for once, and, though in a prison, asserted he was never better disposed to be merry. The waiter soon made his appearance with preparations for dinner; a table was lent us by the gaoler, who seemed remarkably assiduous; the wine was disposed in order, and two very well dressed dishes were brought in.

My daughter had not yet heard of her poor bro-

ther's melancholy situation, and we all seemed unwilling to damp her cheerfulness by the relation. But it was in vain that I attempted to appear cheerful; the circumstances of my unfortunate son broke through all efforts to dissemble; so that I was at last obliged to damp our mirth by relating his misfortunes, and wishing that he might be permitted to share with us in this little interval of satisfaction. After my guests were recovered from the consternation my account had produced, I requested also that Mr Jenkinson, a fellow-prisoner, might be admitted, and the gaoler granted my request with an air of unusual submission. The clanking of my son's irons was no sooner heard along the passage, than his sister ran impatiently to meet him; while Mr Burchell, in the mean time, asked me if my son's name was George? to which replying in the affirmative, he still continued silent. As soon as my boy entered the room, I could perceive he regarded Mr Burchell with a look of astonishment and reverence. "Come on," cried I, my son; though we are fallen "very low, yet Providence has been pleased to "grant us some small relaxation from pain. Thy "sister is restored to us; and there is her deliverer: "to that brave man it is that I am indebted for yet "having a daughter; give him, my boy, the hand "of friendship, he deserves our warmest gratitude."

My son seemed all this while regardless of what I said, and still continued fixed at a respectful distance.—"My dear brother," cried his sister, "why

“don’t you thank my good deliverer ; the brave
“should ever love each other.”

He still continued his silence and astonishment, till our guest at last perceived himself to be known, and, assuming all his native dignity, desired my son to come forward. Never before had I seen any thing so truly majestic as the air he assumed upon this occasion. The greatest object in the universe, says a certain philosopher, is a good man struggling with adversity ; yet there is still a greater, which is the good man that comes to relieve it. After he had regarded my son for some time with a superior air, “ I again find,” said he, “ unthinking boy, that “ the same crime”——But here he was interrupted by one of the gaoler’s servants, who came to inform us, that a person of distinction, who had driven into town with a chariot and several attendants, sent his respects to the gentleman that was with us, and begged to know when he should think proper to be waited upon.——“ Bid the fellow “ wait,” cried our guest, “ till I shall have leisure “ to receive him ;” and then turning to my son, “ I “ again find, Sir,” proceeded he, “ that you are “ guilty of the same offence for which you once “ had my reproof, and for which the law is now “ preparing its justest punishments. You imagine, “ perhaps, that a contempt for your own life gives “ you a right to take that of another ; but where, “ Sir, is the difference between a duellist, who hazards a life of no value, and the murderer, who

"acts with greater security? Is it any diminution
"of the gamester's fraud, when he alledges that he
"has staked a counter?"

"Alas, Sir," cried I, "whoever you are, pity
"the poor misguided creature; for what he has
"done was in obedience to a deluded mother, who,
"in the bitterness of her resentment, required him,
"upon her blessing, to avenge her quarrel. Here,
"Sir, is the letter, which will serve to convince you
"of her imprudence, and diminish his guilt."

He took the letter, and hastily read it over.
"This," says he, "though not a perfect excuse, is
"such a palliation of his fault as induces me to for-
"give him. And now, Sir," continued he, kindly
taking my son by the hand, "I see you are sur-
"prised at finding me here; but I have often visit-
"ed prisons upon occasions less interesting. I am
"now come to see justice done a worthy man, for
"whom I have the most sincere esteem. I have
"long been a disguised spectator of thy father's be-
"nevolence. I have at his little dwelling enjoyed
"respect uncontaminated by flattery, and have re-
"ceived that happiness that courts could not give,
"from the amusing simplicity round his fire side.
"My nephew has been apprized of my intentions of
"coming here, and I find is arrived; it would be
"wronging him and you to condemn him without
"examination: if there be injury, there shall be re-
"dress; and this I may say without boasting, that

"none has ever taxed the justice of Sir William Thornhill."

We now found the personage whom we had as a harmless amusing companion, was no other than the celebrated Sir William Thornhill, to whose virtues and singularities scarce any were strangers. The poor Mr Burchell was in reality a man of large fortune and great interest, to whom senates listened with applause, and whom party heard with conviction, who was the friend of his country, but loyal to his king. My poor wife, recollecting her former familiarity, seemed to shrink with apprehension; but Sophia, who a few moments before thought him her own, now perceiving the immense distance to which he was removed by fortune, was unable to conceal her tears.

"Ah! Sir," cried my wife, with a piteous aspect, "how is it possible that I can ever have your forgiveness: the flights you received from me the last time I had the honour of seeing you at our house, and the jokes which I audaciously threw out; these jokes, Sir, I fear, can never be forgiven."

"My dear good lady," returned he with a smile, "if you had your joke, I had my answer; I'll leave it to all the company if mine were not as good as yours. To say the truth, I know no body whom I am disposed to be angry with at present, but the fellow who so frightened my little girl here. I had

“not even time to examine the rascal’s person, so
“as to describe him in an advertisement. Can you
“tell me, Sophia, my dear, whether you should know
“him again?”

“Indeed, Sir,” replied she, “I can’t be positive ;
“yet, now I recollect, he had a large mark over one
“of his eyebrows.” “I ask pardon, Madam,” interrupted Jenkinson, who was by, “but be so good
“as to inform me, if the fellow wore his own
“red hair.”—“Yes, I think so,” cried Sophia.—
“And did your honour,” continued he, turning to Sir William, “observe the length of his legs?”—
“I can’t be sure of their length,” cried the baronet,
“but I am convinced of their swiftness ; for he out-
“run me, which is what I thought few men in the
“kingdom could have done.”—“Please your honour,” cried Jenkinson, “I know the man : it is
“certainly the same ; the best runner in England ;
“he has beaten Pinwire of Newcastle : Timothy
“Baxter is his name ; I know him perfectly, and
“the very place of his retreat this moment. If your
“honour will bid Mr Gaoler let two of his men go
“with me, I’ll engage to produce him to you in an
“hour at farthest.” Upon this the gaoler was
called, who instantly appearing, Sir William demanded if he knew him ? “Yes, please your honour,” replied the gaoler, “I know Sir William
“Thornhill well ; and every body that knows any
“thing of him, will desire to know more of him.”
“Well then,” said the baronet, “my request is,

“that you will permit this man and two of your
“servants to go upon a message, by my authority;
“and, as I am in the commission of the peace, I un-
“dertake to secure you.”—“Your promise is suffi-
“cient,” replied the other, “and you may, at a
“minute’s warning, send them over England when-
“ever your honour thinks fit.”

In pursuance of the gaoler’s compliance, Jenkin-
son was dispatched in search of Timothy Baxter,
while we were amused with the assiduity of our
youngest boy Bill, who had just come in, and climb-
ed up to Sir William’s neck, in order to kiss him.
His mother was going immediately to chastise his
familiarity; but the worthy man prevented her,
and taking the child, all ragged as he was, upon
his knee, “What, Bill, you chubbey rogue,” cried
he, “do you remember your old friend Burchell;
“and Dick too, my honest veteran, are you here;
“you shall find I have not forgot you.” So saying,
he gave each a large piece of gingerbread, which
the poor fellows ate very heartily, as they had got
that morning but a very scanty breakfast.

We now sat down to dinner, which was almost
cold; but previously, my arm still continuing pain-
ful, Sir William wrote a prescription, for he had made
the study of physic his amusement, and was more
than moderately skilled in the profession: this being
sent to an apothecary who lived in the place, my
arm was dressed, and I found almost instantaneous

relief. We were waited upon at dinner by the gaoler himself, who was willing to do our guest all the honour in his power. But, before we had well dined, another message was brought from his nephew, desiring permission to appear, in order to vindicate his innocence and honour: with which request the baronet complied, and desired Mr Thornhill to be introduced.

C H A P. XII.

FORMER BENEVOLENCE NOW REPAID WITH UNEXPECTED INTEREST.

MR THORNHILL made his entrance with a smile, which he seldom wanted, and was going to embrace his uncle, which the other repulsed with an air of disdain. "No fawning, Sir, at present," cried the Baronet, with a look of severity; "the only way to my heart is by the road of honour: but here I only see complicated instances of falsehood, cowardice, and oppression. How is it, Sir, that this poor man, for whom I know you professed a friendship, is used thus hardly? His daughter vilely seduced, as a recompence for his hospitality, and he himself thrown into a prison, perhaps for resenting the insult? His son too, whom you feared to face as a man"——

"Is it possible, Sir," interrupted his nephew, "that my uncle could object that as a crime which

“his repeated instructions alone have persuaded me
“to avoid.”

“Your rebuke,” cried Sir William, “is just;
“you have acted in this instance prudently and
“well, though not quite as your father would have
“done: my brother indeed was the soul of honour:
“but thou——yes, you have acted in this instance
“perfectly right, and it has my warmest appro-
“bation.”

“And I hope,” said his nephew, “that the rest
“of my conduct will not be found to deserve cen-
“sure. I appeared, Sir, with this gentleman’s
“daughter, at some places of public amusement:
“thus, what was levity, scandal called by a harsher
“name, and it was reported that I had debauched
“her. I waited on her father in person, will-
“ing to clear the thing to his satisfaction, and
“he received me only with insult and abuse. As
“for the rest, with regard to his being here, my at-
“torney and steward can best inform you, as I com-
“mit the management of business entirely to them.
“If he has contracted debts, and is unwilling, or
“even unable to pay them, it is their business to
“proceed in this manner, and I see no hardship or
“injustice of pursuing the most legal means of re-
“drefs.”

“If this,” cried Sir William, “be as you have
“stated it, there is nothing unpardonable in your

“offence ; and though your conduct might have
“been more generous, in not suffering this gentle-
“man to be oppressed by subordinate tyranny, yet
“it has been at least equitable.”

“He cannot contradict a single particular,” replied the squire ; “I defy him to do so ; and several of my servants are ready to attest what I say. Thus, Sir,” continued he, finding that I was silent, for in fact I could not contradict him, “thus, Sir, my own innocence is vindicated: But though, at your entreaty, I am ready to forgive this gentleman every other offence, yet his attempts to lessen me in your esteem excite a resentment that I cannot govern ; and this too at a time when his son was actually preparing to take away my life : this, I say, was such guilt, that I am determined to let the law take its course. I have here the challenge that was sent me, and two witnesses to prove it ; and even though my uncle himself should dissuade me, which I know he will not, yet I will see public justice done, and he shall suffer for it.”

“Thou monster,” cried my wife, “hast thou not had vengeance enough already, but must my poor boy feel thy cruelty. I hope that good Sir William will protect us, for my son is as innocent as a child ; I am sure he is, and never did harm to man.”

“Madam,” replied the good man, “your wishes for his safety are not greater than mine; but I am sorry to find his guilt too plain; and if my nephew persists”——But the appearance of Jenkinson and the gaoler’s two servants now called off our attention, who entered, hauling in a tall man, very genteelly dressed, and answering the description already given of the ruffian who had carried off my daughter.—“Here,” cried Jenkinson, pulling him in, “here we have him; and if ever there was a candidate for Tyburn, this is one.”

The moment Mr Thornhill perceived the prisoner, and Jenkinson, who had him in custody, he seemed to shrink back with terror. His face became pale with conscious guilt, and he would have withdrawn; but Jenkinson, who perceived the design, stopped him.—“What, Squire,” cried he, “are you ashamed of your two old acquaintances, Jenkinson and Baxter: but this is the way that all great men forget their friends, though I am resolved we will not forget you. Our prisoner, please your honour,” continued he, turning to Sir William, “has already confessed all. He declares that it was Mr Thornhill who first put him upon this affair; that he gave him the clothes he now wears, to appear like a gentleman, and furnished him with the post-chaise. The plan was laid between them, that he should carry off the young lady to a place of safety, and that he should there threaten and terrify her; but Mr Thornhill was

“to come in, in the mean time, as if by accident, to
“her rescue, and that they should fight a while, and
“then he was to run off, by which Mr Thornhill
“would have the better opportunity of gaining her
“affections himself, under the character of her de-
“fender.”

Sir William remembered the coat to have been frequently worn by his nephew; and all the rest the prisoner himself confirmed by a more circumstantial account, concluding, that Mr Thornhill had often declared to him that he was in love with both sisters at the same time.

“Heavens!” cried Sir William, “what a viper
“have I been fostering in my bosom! And so fond
“of public justice too as he seemed to be. But he
“shall have it: Secure him, Mr Gaoler:—yet
“hold, I fear there is not legal evidence to detain
“him.”

Upon this Mr Thornhill, with the utmost humility, entreated that two such abandoned wretches might not be admitted as evidences against him, but that his servants should be examined.—“Your servants!” replied Sir William, “wretch, call them
“yours no longer: but come, let us hear what
“those fellows have to say; let his butler be called.”

When the butler was introduced, he soon perceived by his former master's looks that all his

power was now over. "Tell me," cried Sir William, sternly, "have you ever seen your master, "and that fellow dressed up in his clothes, in company together!" "Yes, please your honour," cried the butler, "a thousand times: he was the "man that always brought him his ladies."—"How," interrupted young Mr Thornhill, "this "to my face!"—"Yes," replied the butler, or to "any man's face. To tell you a truth, Mr Thornhill, I never either loved you or liked you, and I "don't care if I tell you now a piece of my mind." "Now then," cried Jenkinson, "tell his honour "whether you know any thing of me."—"I can't "say," replied the butler, "that I know much good "of you. The night that gentleman's daughter "was deluded to our house, you were one of them." "So then," cried Sir William, "I find you have "brought a very fine witness to prove your innocence: thou stain to humanity! to associate with "such wretches!" (But continuing his examination.) "You tell me, Mr Butler, that this was the "person who brought him this old gentleman's "daughter." "No, please your honour," replied the butler, "he did not bring her, for the squire "himself undertook that business; but he brought "the priest that pretended to marry them."—"It "is but too true," cried Jenkinson, "I cannot deny "it, that was the employment assigned me, and I "confess it to my confusion."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the baronet, "how

“every new discovery of his villany alarms me !
“All his guilt is now too plain ; and I find his present prosecution was dictated by tyranny, cowardice, and revenge. At my request, Mr Gaoler, set this young officer, now your prisoner, free, and trust to me for the consequences. I’ll make it my business to set the affair in a proper light to my friend the magistrate who has committed him. But where is the unfortunate young lady herself : let her appear to confront this wretch ; I long to know by what arts he has seduced her honour. Entreat her to come in. Where is she ?”

“Ah ! Sir,” said I, “that question stings me to the heart : I was once indeed happy in a daughter, but her miseries”——Another interruption here prevented me ; for who should make her appearance but Miss Arabella Wilmot, who was next day to have been married to Mr Thornhill. Nothing could equal her surprise at seeing Sir William and his nephew here before her ; for her arrival was quite accidental. It happened that she and the old gentleman her father were passing through the town on their way to her aunt’s, who had insisted that her nuptials with Mr Thornhill should be consummated at her house ; but stopping for refreshment, they put up at an inn at the other end of the town. It was there from the window that the young lady happened to observe one of my little boys playing in the street, and instantly sending a footman to bring the child to her, she learnt from him some account of our mis-

fortunes, but was still kept ignorant of young Mr Thornhill's being the cause. Though her father made several remonstrances on the impropriety of going to a prison to visit us, yet they were ineffectual: she desired the child to conduct her, which he did; and it was thus she surprised us at a juncture so unexpected.

Nor can I go on without a reflection on those accidental meetings, which, though they happen every day, seldom excite our surprise but upon some extraordinary occasion. To what a fortuitous concurrence do we not owe every pleasure and convenience of our lives. How many seeming accidents must unite before we can be clothed or fed. The peasant must be disposed to labour, the shower must fall, the wind fill the merchant's sail, or numbers must want the usual supply.

We all continued silent for some moments, while my charming pupil, which was the name I generally gave this young lady, united in her looks compassion and astonishment, which gave new finishings to her beauty. "Indeed, my dear Mr Thornhill," cried she to the squire, who she supposed was come here to succour, and not to oppress, "I take it a little unkindly that you should come here without me, or never inform me of the situation of a family so dear to us both; you know I should take as much pleasure in contributing to the relief of my reverend old master here, whom I shall ever

“esteem, as you can. But I find that, like your
“uncle, you take a pleasure in doing good in se-
“cret.”

“He find pleasure in doing good!” cried Sir William, interrupting her. “No, my dear, his
“pleasures are as base as he is. You see him, Ma-
“dam, as complete a villain as ever disgraced hu-
“manity,—a wretch, who, after having deluded
“this poor man’s daughter, after plotting against
“the innocence of her sister, has thrown the father
“into prison, and the eldest son into fetters, because
“he had courage to face his betrayer. And give
“me leave, Madam, now to congratulate you upon
“an escape from the embraces of such a monster.”

“O goodness!” cried the lovely girl, “how have
“I been deceived! Mr Thornhill informed me for
“certain, that this gentleman’s eldest son, Captain
“Primrose, was gone off to America with his new
“married lady.”

“My sweetest Miss,” cried my wife, “he has
“told you nothing but falsehoods. My son George
“never left the kingdom, nor never was married.
“Though you have forsaken him, he always loved
“you too well to think of any body else; and I
“have heard him say, he would die a bachelor for
“your sake.” She then expatiated on the sincerity
of her son’s passion; she set his duel with Mr
Thornhill in a proper light; from thence she made

a rapid digression to the squire's debaucheries, his pretended marriages, and ended with a most insulting picture of his cowardice.

“Good heavens!” cried Miss Wilmot, “how
“very near have I been to the brink of ruin! But
“how great is my pleasure to have escaped it! Ten
“thousand falsehoods has this gentleman told me.
“He had at last art enough to persuade me, that my
“promise to the only man I esteemed was no longer
“binding, since he had been unfaithful. By his
“falsehoods I was taught to detest one equally brave
“and generous.”

But by this time my son was freed from the incumbrances of justice. Mr Jenkinson also, who had acted as his valet-de-chambre, had dressed up his hair, and furnished him with whatever was necessary to make a genteel appearance. He now therefore entered, handsomely dressed in his regimentals; and, without vanity (for I am above it), he appeared as handsome a fellow as ever wore a military dress. As he entered, he made Miss Wilmot a modest and distant bow, for he was not as yet acquainted with the change which the eloquence of his mother had wrought in his favour. But no decorums could restrain the impatience of his blushing mistress to be forgiven. Her tears, her looks, all contributed to discover the real sensations of her heart for having forgotten her former promise, and having suffered herself to be deluded by an impostor. My son appeared

amazed at her condescension, and could scarce believe it real.—“Sure, Madam,” cried he, “this is “but delusion! I can never have merited this! “To be blessed thus is to be too happy.” “No, Sir,” replied she, “I have been deceived, basely deceived, “else nothing could have ever made me unjust to “my promise. You know my friendship, you have “long known it; but forget what I have done, “and, as you once had my warmest vows of constancy, you shall now have them repeated; and be “assured, that if your Arabella cannot be your’s, “she shall never be another’s.”—“And no other’s “you shall be,” cried Sir William, “if I have any “influence with your father.”

This hint was sufficient for my son Moses, who immediately flew to the inn where the old gentleman was, to inform him of every circumstance that had happened. But, in the mean time, the squire perceiving that he was on every side undone, now finding that no hopes were left from flattery or dissimulation, concluded that his wisest way would be to turn and face his pursuers. Thus, laying aside all shame, he appeared the open hardy villain. “I “find then,” cried he, “that I am to expect no “justice here; but I am resolved it shall be done me. “You shall know, Sir,” turning to Sir William, “I “am no longer a poor dependent upon your favours. “I scorn them. Nothing can keep Miss Wilmot’s “fortune from me, which, I thank her father’s affluence, is pretty large. The articles, and a bond for

“her fortune, are signed, and safe in my possession.
“It was her fortune, not her person, that induced
“me to wish for this match; and, possessed of the
“one, let who will take the other.”

This was an alarming blow: Sir William was sensible of the justice of his claims, for he had been instrumental in drawing up the marriage articles himself. Miss Wilmot, therefore, perceiving that her fortune was irretrievably lost, turning to my son, she asked if the loss of fortune could lessen her value to him. “Though fortune,” said she, “is out of my power, at least I have my hand to give.”

“And that, Madam,” cried her real lover, “was indeed all that you ever had to give, at least, all that I ever thought worth the acceptance. And I now protest, my Arabella, by all that’s happy, your want of fortune this moment increases my pleasure, as it serves to convince my sweet girl of my sincerity.”

Mr Wilmot now entering, he seemed not a little pleased at the danger his daughter had just escaped, and readily consented to a dissolution of the match. But finding that her fortune, which was secured to Mr Thornhill by bond, would not be given up, nothing could exceed his disappointment. He now saw that his money must all go to enrich one who had no fortune of his own. He could bear his being

a rascal; but to want an equivalent to his daughter's fortune was wormwood. He sat, therefore, for some minutes employed in the most mortifying speculations, till Sir William attempted to lessen his anxiety.—“ I must confess, Sir,” cried he, “ that your present disappointment does not entirely displease me. Your immoderate passion for wealth is now justly punished. But, though the young lady cannot be rich, she has still a competence sufficient to give content. Here you see an honest young soldier, who is willing to take her without fortune; they have long loved each other; and for the friendship I bear his father, my interest shall not be wanting for his promotion. Leave then that ambition which disappoints you, and for once admit happiness which courts your acceptance.”

“ Sir William,” replied the old gentleman, “ be assured I never yet forced her inclinations, nor will I now. If she still continues to love this young gentleman, let her have him with all my heart. There is still, thank Heaven, some fortune left, and your promise will make it something more. Only let my old friend here (meaning me) give me a promise of settling six thousand pounds upon my girl, if ever he should come to his fortune, and I am ready this night to be the first to join them together.”

As it now remained with me to make the young

couple happy, I readily gave a promise of making the settlement he required, which, to one who had so little expectations as I, was no great favour. We had now, therefore, the satisfaction of seeing them fly into each other's arms in a transport. "After all my misfortunes," cried my son George, "to be thus rewarded! Sure this is more than I could ever have presumed to hope for. To be possessed of all that's good, and after such an interval of pain! My warmest wishes could never rise so high!"—"Yes, my George," returned his lovely bride, "now let the wretch take my fortune; since you are happy without it, so am I. O what an exchange have I made, from the basest of men, to the dearest, best! Let him enjoy our fortune, I now can be happy even in indigence." "And I promise you," cried the squire, with a malicious grin, "that I shall be happy with what you despise." "Hold, hold, Sir," cried Jenkinson, "there are two words to that bargain. As for that lady's fortune, Sir, you shall never touch a single stiver of it.—Pray your honour," continued he to Sir William, "can the squire have this lady's fortune if he be married to another?" "How can you make so simple a demand," replied the baronet, "undoubtedly he cannot." "I am sorry for that," cried Jenkinson; "for as this gentleman and I have been old fellow-sporters, I have a friendship for him. But I must declare, as well as I love him, that his contract is not worth a tobacco-stopper, for he is married already."—"You lie, like a raf-

"cal," returned the squire, who seemed roused by this insult, "I never was legally married to any woman."—"Indeed, begging your honour's pardon," replied the other, "you were; and I hope you will show a proper return of friendship to your own honest Jenkinson, who brings you a wife, and if the company restrain their curiosity a few minutes, they shall see her." So saying, he went off with his usual celerity, and left us all unable to form any probable conjecture as to his design. "Ay, let him go," cried the squire; "whatever else I may have done, I defy him there. I am too old now to be frightened with squibs."

"I am surprised," said the baronet, "what the fellow can intend by this. Some low piece of humour, I suppose!"—"Perhaps, Sir," replied I, "he may have a more serious meaning. For when we reflect on the various schemes this gentleman laid to seduce innocence, perhaps some man more artful than the rest has been found able to deceive him. When we consider what numbers he has ruined, how many parents now feel with anguish the infamy and the contamination which he has brought into their families, it would not surprise me if some one of them—Amazement! Do I see my lost daughter! Do I hold her! It is, it is my life, my happiness. I thought thee lost, my Olivia, yet still I hold thee—and still shalt thou live to bless me."—The warmest transports of the fondest lover were not greater than mine when

I saw him introduce my child, and held my daughter in my arms, whose silence only spoke her raptures. "And art thou returned to me, my darling," cried I, "to be my comfort in age?" "That she is," cried Jenkinson; "and make much of her, for she is your own honourable child, and as honest a woman as any in the whole room, let the other be who she will. And as for you, squire, as sure as you stand there, this young lady is your lawful wedded wife. And, to convince you that I speak nothing but truth, here is the licence by which you were married together." So saying, he put the licence into the baronet's hands, who read it, and found it perfect in every respect.— "And now, gentlemen," continued he, "I find you are surprised at all this; but a few words will explain the difficulty. That there squire of renown, for whom I have a great friendship, but that's between ourselves, has often employed me in doing odd little things for him. Among the rest, he commissioned me to procure him a false licence and a false priest, in order to deceive this young lady. But, as I was very much his friend, what did I do, but went and got a true licence and a true priest, and married them both as fast as the cloth could make them. Perhaps you'll think it was generosity that made me do all this. But no. To my shame I confess it, my only design was to keep the licence, and let the squire know that I could prove it upon him whenever I thought proper, and so make him come down

" whenever I wanted money." A burst of pleasure now seemed to fill the whole apartment ; our joy reached even to the common room, where the prisoners themselves sympathized,

And shook their chains
In transport and rude harmony.

Happiness expanded upon every face, and even Olivia's cheek seemed flushed with pleasure. To be thus restored to reputation, to friends, and fortune, at once, was a rapture sufficient to stop the progress of decay, and restore former health and vivacity. But perhaps, among all, there was not one who felt sincerer pleasure than I. Still holding the dear loved child in my arms, I asked my heart if these transports were not delusion. " How could you," cried I, turning to Mr Jenkinson, " how could you add " to my miseries by the story of her death ! But it " matters not ; my pleasure at finding her again is " more than a recompence for the pain."

" As to your question," replied Jenkinson, " that " is easily answered. I thought the only probable " means of freeing you from prison was by submit- " ting to the squire, and consenting to his marriage " with the other young lady. But these you had " vowed never to grant while your daughter was " living : there was therefore no other method to " bring things to bear, but by persuading you that " she was dead. I prevailed on your wife to join

“in the deceit, and we have not had a fit opportunity of undeceiving you till now.”

In the whole assembly, now, there only appeared two faces that did not glow with transport. Mr Thornhill's assurance had entirely forsaken him: he now saw the gulph of infamy and want before him; and trembled to take the plunge. He therefore fell on his knees before his uncle, and, in a voice of piercing misery, implored compassion. Sir William was going to spurn him away, but at my request he raised him, and, after pausing a few moments, “Thy vices, crimes, and ingratitude,” cried he, “deserve no tenderness: yet thou shalt not be entirely forsaken; a bare competence shall be supplied to support the wants of life, but not its follies. This young lady, thy wife, shall be put in possession of a third part of that fortune which once was thine, and from her tenderness alone thou art to expect any extraordinary supplies for the future.” He was going to express his gratitude for such kindness in a set speech; but the baronet prevented him, by bidding him not aggravate his meanness, which was already but too apparent. He ordered him at the same time to be gone, and from all his former domestics to choose one such as he should think proper, which was all that should be granted to attend him.

As soon as he left us, Sir William very politely stepped up to his new niece with a smile, and wished

her joy. His example was followed by Miss Wilmot and her father: my wife too kissed her daughter with much affection, as, to use her own expression, she was now made an honest woman of. Sophia and Moses followed in turn; and even our benefactor Jenkinson desired to be admitted to that honour. Our satisfaction seemed scarce capable of increase. Sir William, whose greatest pleasure was in doing good, now looked round with a countenance open as the sun, and saw nothing but joy in the looks of all, except that of my daughter Sophia, who, for some reasons we could not comprehend, did not seem perfectly satisfied. "I think now," cried he, with a smile, "that all the company, except one or two, seem perfectly happy. There only remains an act of justice for me to do. You are sensible, Sir," continued he, turning to me, "of the obligations we both owe Mr Jenkinson for his late assiduity in detecting a scoundrel. It is but just we should both reward him for it. Your youngest daughter, Miss Sophia, will, I am sure, make him very happy; and he shall have from me five hundred pounds as her fortune, and upon this I am sure they can live very comfortably together. Come, Miss Sophia, what say you to this match of my making? Will you have him?"—My poor girl seemed almost sinking into her mother's arms at the hideous proposal.—"Have him, Sir!" cried she faintly. "No, Sir, never."—"What," cried he again, "not have Mr Jenkinson, your benefactor, an handsome young fellow, with five

“hundred pounds, and good expectations?”—“I
“beg, Sir,” returned she, scarce able to speak,
“that you’ll desist, and not make me so very wretch-
“ed.”—Was ever such obstinacy known,” cried he
again, “to refuse a man whom the family has such
“infinite obligations to, who has preserved your
“sister. What! not have him!”—“No, Sir, ne-
“ver,” replied she, angrily, “I’d sooner die first.”
“If that be the case, then,” cried he, “if you will
“not have him,—I think I must have you myself.”
And so saying, he caught her to his breast with ar-
dour. “My loveliest, my most sensible of girls,”
cried he, “how could you ever think your own
“Burchell could deceive you! or that Sir William
“Thornhill could ever cease to admire a mistress
“that loved him for himself alone? I have for
“some years sought for a woman, who, a stranger to
“my fortune, could think that I had merit as a man.
“After having tried in vain, even among the pert
“and ugly, how great at last must be my rapture
“to have made a conquest over such sense and such
“heavenly beauty.” Then turning to Jenkinson :
“As I cannot, Sir, part with this young lady myself,
“for she has taken a fancy to the cut of my face,
“all the recompence I can make is to give you her
“fortune, and you may call upon my steward to-mor-
“row for five hundred pounds.” Thus we had all our
compliments to repeat, and Lady Thornhill under-
went the same round of ceremony that her sister had
done before. In the mean time, Sir William’s gentle-
man appeared to tell us that the equipages were rea-

dy to carry us to the inn, where every thing was prepared for our reception. My wife and I led the van, and left those gloomy mansions of sorrow. The generous baronet ordered forty pounds to be distributed among the prisoners; and Mr Wilmot, induced by his example, gave half the sum. We were received below by the villagers, and I saw and shook by the hand two or three of my honest parishioners, who were among the number. They attended us to our inn, where a sumptuous entertainment was provided, and coarser provisions distributed in great quantities among the populace.

After supper, as my spirits were exhausted by the alteration of pleasure and pain which they had sustained during the day, I asked permission to withdraw, and leaving the company in the midst of their mirth, as soon as I found myself alone, I poured my heart in gratitude to the giver of joy as well as sorrow, and slept undisturbed till morning.

C H A P. XIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

THE next morning, as soon as I awaked, I found my eldest son sitting by my bed side, who came to increase my joy with another turn of fortune in my favour. First having released me from the settlement that I had made the day before

in his favour, he let me know that my merchant, who had failed in town, was arrested at Antwerp, and there had given up effects to a much greater amount than what was due to his creditors. My boy's generosity pleased me almost as much as this unlooked for good fortune. But I had some doubts whether I ought in justice to accept his offer. While I was pondering upon this, Sir William entered the room, to whom I communicated my doubts. His opinion was, that, as my son was already possessed of a very affluent fortune by his marriage, I might accept his offer without any hesitation. His business, however, was to inform me, that, as he had the night before sent for the licences, and expected them every hour, he hoped that I would not refuse my assistance in making all the company happy that morning. A footman entered while we were speaking, to tell us that the messenger was returned; and as I was by this time ready, I went down, where I found the whole company as merry as affluence and innocence could make them. However, as they were now preparing for a very solemn ceremony, their laughter entirely displeased me. I told them of the grave, becoming, and sublime deportment they should assume upon this mystical occasion, and read them two homilies and a thesis of my own composing, in order to prepare them. Yet they still seemed perfectly refractory and ungovernable. Even as we were going along to church, to which I led the way, all gravity had quite forsaken them, and I was often tempted to turn back in indignation. In church a

new dilemma arose, which promised no easy solution. This was, which couple should be married first: my son's bride warmly insisted, that Lady Thornhill (that was to be) should take the lead; but this the other refused with equal ardour, protesting she would not be guilty of such rudeness for the world. The argument was supported for some time between both with equal obstinacy and good breeding. But as I stood all this time with my book ready, I was at last quite tired of the contest; and shutting it, "I perceive," cried I, "that none of you have a mind to be married; and I think we had as good go back again, for I suppose there will be no business done here to-day."—This at once reduced them to reason. The baronet and his lady were first married, and then my son and his lovely partner.

I had previously that morning given orders that a coach should be sent for my honest neighbour Flamborough and his family, by which means, upon our return to the inn, we had the pleasure of finding the two Miss Flamboroughs alighted before us. Mr Jenkinson gave his hand to the eldest, and my son Moses led up the other; (and I have since found that he has taken a real liking to the girl, and my consent and bounty he shall have, whenever he thinks proper to demand them). We were no sooner returned to the inn, but numbers of my parishioners, hearing of my success, came to congratulate me; but among the rest were those who rose to rescue

me, and whom I formerly rebuked with such sharpness. I told the story to Sir William, my son-in-law, who went out and reproved them with great severity ; but finding them quite disheartened by his harsh reproof, he gave them half a guinea a-piece to drink his health, and raise their dejected spirits.

Soon after this we were called to a very genteel entertainment, which was dressed by Mr Thornhill's cook. And it may not be improper to observe, with respect to that gentleman, that he now resides in quality of companion at a relation's house, being very well liked, and seldom sitting at the side table, except when there is no room at the other ; for they make no stranger of him. His time is pretty much taken up in keeping his relation, who is a little melancholy, in spirits, and in learning to blow the French-horn. My eldest daughter, however, still remembers him with regret ; and she even has told me (though I make a great secret of it), that, when he reforms, she may be brought to relent. But to return, for I am not apt to digress thus, when we were to sit down to dinner, our ceremonies were going to be renewed. The question was, whether my eldest daughter, as being a matron, should not sit above the two young brides : But the debate was cut short by my son George, who proposed that the company should sit indiscriminately, and every gentleman by his lady. This was received with great approbation by all, excepting my wife, who, I could perceive, was not perfectly satisfied, as she

expected to have had the pleasure of sitting at the head of the table, and carving all the meat for all the company. But, notwithstanding this, it is impossible to describe our good humour. I can't say whether we had more wit amongst us now than usual; but I am certain we had more laughing, which answered the end as well. One jest I particularly remember: Old Mr Wilmot drinking to Moses, whose head was turned another way, my son replied, "Madam, I thank you." Upon which the old gentleman, winking upon the rest of the company, observed that he was thinking of his mistress. At which jest I thought the two Miss Flamboroughs would have died with laughing. As soon as dinner was over, according to my old custom, I requested that the table might be taken away, to have the pleasure of seeing all my family assembled once more by a cheerful fire side. My two little ones sat upon each knee, the rest of the company by their partners. I had nothing now on this side of the grave to wish for; all my cares were over, my pleasure was unspeakable. It now only remained that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity.

THE END.

